LEMIRA OF LORRAINE.

A Romance.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

I sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds,
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me all too meane the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng.
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

FAERY QUEENE.

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LEMIRA OF LORRAINE.

CHAPTER I.

But thou, O Hope! with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promised pleasure;
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!

COLLINS.

"CAN it be my brother?" exclaimed Rosalie, starting from her seat, when the loud peal of the bell at the gate of St. Maure's convent announced the arrival of a visitor: then, peeping through the closely grated window, she added, "Ah! it is certainly Mellidor: but how melancholy he looks! I fear that he

brings no good news for his poor Rosalie!"

Breathing a sigh of gloomy anticipation, she then left the room; but the momentary sadness which dimmed the sparkling vivacity of her black eyes was instantly dispelled when she found herself in the arms of her beloved brother, receiving and returning his caresses of fraternal affection.

" Rosalie," said he, regarding her with an eye of fixed attention, " I am now come to acquaint you with your parents' unalterable determination respecting your future destiny: but, before I reveal to you their will, let me inquire whether your abhorrence to the profession of the veil continues in its former violence; or whether the desire of performing an action so pleasing to your father has not corrected your ideas and softened your dislike to this

secluded and religious life? Let me entreat you, my love, to conceal nothing from a brother, the first wish of whose heart is to render you happy."

"Ah, Mellidor!" she answered, "I am certainly unworthy of becoming a member of this holy community; for I find that my aversion to the continual seclusion of a convent increases rather than diminishes every day: I ask not to reside at Paris; or to enjoy the pleasures and gaiety of the world; or to be dressed like my mother in splendid attire; I only ask for liberty to live in some sequestered spot, where, free as the birds which will fly around me, and gay as the flowers which will spring beneath my eye, I shall not envy the rich their palaces, or the dissipated their pleasures. Can this little request be denied?"

"No," said Mellidor to himself;

"and therefore my fate is determined:" then, taking his sister's hand, with a look of tenderness he replied to her:

"Rosalie, your wish is granted, and to-day you shall depart for a villa in Languedoc, which I have desired to be prepared for your reception; where you may forget, amid the beauties of nature, the severity and the gloom of a cloister."

Scarcely had Mellidor concluded his speech, than Rosalie, springing round his neck, uttered incoherent expressions of delight: but her effusions of joy and gratitude were interrupted by the sound of a carriage which stopped at the gate, and by the subsequent entrance of Madame de Clairville, a distant relation of Rosalie's, who had constantly visited her during her residence at St. Maure, and who had always professed to feel for

her the affection of a parent. Rosalie immediately read in her benevolent countenance that she was no stranger to the happy change which had taken place in her young friend's destination; and Mellidor did not long suffer his sister to remain ignorant of the cause of Madame de Clairville's sudden appearance.

"When I confide you, my dearest Rosalie, to the care of this inestimable friend, I am sensible that I confer on you a most essential benefit; for, by pointing out to your young mind the beauties of virtue, she will eventually secure to you the possession of true and solid happiness. Farewell!" he added, endeavouring, by the contemplation of his sister's delight, to reconcile himself to the sacrifice which he designed to make; "business of importance, which calls me into Burgundy, will not allow me to accom-

pany you; and so farewell, my Rosalie!" Then mounting his horse, in a few moments he was carried beyond the reach of their eyes.

Rosalie, with the animated spirits of sixteen, anticipating years of joy in the new world which she was now to inhabit, hastened the preparations for their departure; and, when in the course of a few hours, every thing was finally adjusted, she sprang with a light step and sparkling eye into the carriage, that quickly conveyed her from the terrors of a cloister towards those fairy scenes which her vivid imagination had so strongly and so frequently represented to her.

CHAP. II.

Julia's a manager; she's born for rule,
And knows her wiser husband is a fool;
For difficult amours can smooth the way,
And tender letters dictate, or convey.
YOUNG'S LOVE OF FAME.

THE Vicomte de Valmire was one of that numerous class of the ancient nobility of France who possessed indeed the advantage of high birth, but who were obliged to submit to all the privations of indigence; and, having in early youth contracted an imprudent alliance with a lady of no fortune, he was compelled to live with her in a state of total seclusion until the event of her death, which happened when Mellidor, their only child, had attained his seventh year.

Not long after the decease of his wife the Vicomte married the daughter of a rich bourgeois, who had just beauty enough to think herself handsome, however different might be the opinion of the world, and just wit enough to conduct an intrigue with the most finished artifice and with the most infallible success. With a heart vacant, if not corrupt; a temper irritable and capricious; a mind vain, extravagant, and thoughtless, without judgment and without principle; she was the prey of every novel frivolity, and the victim of every occurring and fashionable vice. At an early period of their marriage the Vicomte discovered the true character of her mind, and having endeavoured, but in vain, to direct her activity into another channel, and to induce her to perform with propriety the duties of a wife and a mother, he was obliged to resign her, with the contempt her folly merited,

to the pursuit of her own dangerous and vicious projects. She abandoned her child, without remorse, from the first moment of her birth, because it was not fashionable for a woman's attention to be engrossed by so trivial a concern as the welfare of her child; and the infant Rosalie would have been consigned to the care of mercenary strangers, if the Vicomte, whose character formed a striking contrast to that of the fair partner of his fortunes, had not fulfilled his duty in a manner more conscientious, but less consistent with the system of fashion. To him, therefore, and to Madame de Clairville, to whose care she was entrusted at her birth, was Rosalie wholly indebted for those attentions which had guarded her tender infancy from harm: but though the Vicomte was continually occupied with the moral happiness of his children, his fear of degrading the parental autho-

rity prevented him from bestowing on them a word or a glance of kindness. Inflexibly severe in the performance of what his judgment assured him was right, he never swerved from his duty to please his inclinations, or to gratify his feelings; and, while his contempt of the follies and detestation of the crimes of the world induced him to avoid its society, his acquaintance was not unfrequently declined in consequence of the moroseness of his manners and the rigidity of his virtue. Towards his children his austerity was peculiarly unbending; and from Mellidor, for whom he performed all the most essential duties of a parent with the greatest punctuality, he had constantly withheld that confidential intercourse which adds to the affection of a sensitive child a double portion of tenderness. The Vicomte's anxiety to render his son the most perfect of men induced him to keep this first

object of his regard under his own eye; and it was with his immediate assistance and direction that the Abbé de Fleurville executed the task of governor to the young nobleman.

From his father's lessons Mellidor derived liberal, but pious, sentiments on religious subjects, principles of high honour, integrity, and strict virtue; while the natural sweetness of his disposition, combining with the mild precepts of his instructor, softened his manner, and rendered his exterior inviting to cordiality and friendship. Possessed of a degree of valour which sometimes amounted to rashness, towards his father alone he was timid, for his high ideas of filial duty would not allow him to question the most disputable of the Vicomte's actions: and the immense distance, which had always been interposed between them,

prevented the young Mellidor from offering the slightest objection to any of his father's commands.

The Vicomte and his son were sometimes visitors to Rosalie, both while she remained with Madame de Clairville, and after she was removed to the convent of St. Maure, which was preferred to a less distant place of education, in consequence of a sister of the Vicomte's being at its head. It was in this situation that Mellidor became tenderly attached to his sister, and though the distance of a hundred and forty miles, which separates Paris from the small town of St. Maure, prevented their constant intercourse, yet his gentle and affectionate manners soon conciliated her love, while the severe countenance of her father inspired her young and timid breast with nothing but alarm.

The monotonous life of a convent, the grated windows, the severe manners of the nuns, the restraint which was visible throughout the whole establishment, united to impart to Rosalie's active mind a distaste for the profession of the veil: and her imagination, dwelling on the pleasures which, as she supposed, were to be found in the world, gradually matured her dislike to the cloister into a rooted and inveterate aversion.

CHAP. III.

The tears capricious beauty loves to shed,
The pouting lip, the sullen silent tongue,
May wake the impassion'd lover's tender dread,
And touch the spring that clasps his soul so
strong;
But ah, beware! the gentle power too long
Will not endure the frown of angry strife;
He shuns contention, and the gloomy throng
Who blast the joys of calm domestic life,
And flies when discord shakes her brand with
quarrels rife.

MRS. TIGHE'S PSYCHE.

When Mellidor had attained his twentieth year his father declared to him that his education was finished, and that his mind and opinions were sufficiently formed to render the lessons of a tutor of no further utility.

It was about this period that Mellidor, reading in the gazette an account of a victory obtained by the great Condé, exclaimed with fervour:

"Oh happy Condé! to have contributed so gloriously to the honour of your country! Fortunate indeed would be my lot could I receive from your lips those precepts of wisdom which, in private life, teach you how to attain to true happiness, while they render your name illustrious in the annals of glory!"

The Vicomte, who heard his son utter this spontaneous effusion, and perceived that he became thoughtful and melancholy, instantly visited the Prince de Condé on his return from the camp; and, having renewed an acquaintance which had before subsisted between them, proposed that Mellidor, of whose talents and principles he

spoke in terms of praise, should have the honour of serving under the command of a man who would unite the character of a friend with that of a general. To this proposition the answer corresponded with the Vicomte's wishes, and it was instantly agreed that the young nobleman should become one of the Prince's aide-de-camps. The interview terminated with an assurance that Mellidor should appear on the following day.

To Condé, who knew how to estimate characters according to their intrinsic worth, the Vicomte de Valmire had always appeared in a light different from that in which the world had regarded him; and, through the coldness of the Vicomte's demeanour, the Prince could easily discover those excellent qualities which were concealed from the eye of a less penetrating observer. From his ideas,

therefore, of the character of the father he was disposed to think favourably of the principles of the son; nor was he sorry on being offered an opportunity of softening that austerity with which he supposed that the manners of his new officer were tinctured from the effects of the education which he had received. When Mellidor, however, to whom the communication of his appointment and future destination had been the subjects of the liveliest joy and gratitude, waited on him on the following day, he was agreeably surprised, in their subsequent intercourse, to find that the young Valmire was as gentle in his manners as he seemed to be firm in his mind, and appeared to unite the softness of the vernal air with the solidity and resistance of the winter's ice. Delighted with his conversation the Prince dismissed him for the present, and requested him to prepare his

father for their speedy separation, as he should require his aide-de-camps to be in readiness to accompany him, in the course of a few weeks, on an expedition, the object of which he could not at that moment explain.

With a joyful heart the youthful hero began his preparations for the army; which, under the command of the great Condé, was shortly to be employed in the subjugation of Franche Comté, then, for the first time, the object of the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth.

The enterprise was threatening with dangers; but no sense of danger could deter Mellidor from partaking in his brave general's conquests; and his situation in his father's house, where the Vicomtesse regarded him as a spy upon her conduct, was become so disagreeable, that a change, less plea-

sant than the one proposed, would have been acceptable to him.

Immersed in pleasure, the Vicomtesse forgot that she had a husband and a daughter, to whom she was accountable for a part of that time which she devoted to gambling and intrigue; until, roused to a sense of the dangerous consequences of his wife's conduct, by the sudden refusal of his banker to accept his drafts, the Vicomte desired a private audience with Caliste, and expostulated with her in severe terms on the excesses of which she was guilty, and which not only exposed her own character to reproach, but would eventually reduce her daughter to poverty. She turned with disgust from a lecture to which she was unaccustomed; and, being sensible that her example could not be beneficial to her daughter, she desired that the Vicomte would compel Rosalie to

take the veil, as her appearance in the world would be attended with an expense incompatible with the present state of their finances. Thus, to gratify her own selfish pleasures, did she sacrifice without remorse her only child to a life which she regarded with horror. Finding that his remonstrances could not influence a mind rendered callous by dissipation, he quitted her with a threat of employing more effectual methods for putting a period to her extravagant proceedings. The lettre de cachet, that his parting look seemed to announce, had some effect on the Vicomtesse: but the salutary impression was instantly effaced by the conversation of her favourites, to whom she loudly complained of the savage treatment which she had experienced from her husband.

Reflection too certainly convinced the Vicomte, that, to enable him to

bestow on his son a fortune sufficient to support his rank in society, it would be absolutely necessary for Rosalie to take the veil; and he, therefore, commanded Mellidor to take a journey to St. Maure for the purpose of announcing to his sister the measure which was in contemplation respecting her.

When Mellidor, however, began to converse on the topic of his mission, Rosalie, throwing herself at his feet, implored him to use all his influence with her father to induce him to resign his purpose. Interested by her tears, Mellidor undertook to plead her cause; and so powerfully was his eloquence exerted in her favour that the Vicomte relinquished his intentions for the present, and quieted Mellidor's apprehensions with the promise of awaiting his return from the army, before he adopted any final resolu-

tion respecting Rosalie's future destination.

When every preparation for Mellidor's departure was completed, he took an affectionate leave of his father, and joined the army of the Prince de Condé, accompanying its circuitous route to Franche Comté.

On this theatre of action the young soldier had an ample range for the display of that high sense of honour, that noble contempt of danger, that steady and persevering rectitude, and those superior abilities, which rendered him equally useful in peace or in war, as a friend and a soldier, as a commander in the field, or as an adviser in the camp. He soon found that he possessed what every officer should endeavour to obtain, the affections and the confidence of his men;* and when, towering half a head above

those who surrounded him, the youthful leader appeared in the field, they were always ready to follow him, however dangerous might be the exploit, for honour and glory still attended on his steps.

CHAP. IV.

Eftsoones he perced through his chaufed chest
With thrilling point of deadly yron brand,
And launcht his lordly hart; with death op-
prest [brest.
He ror'd aloud, whiles life forsook his stubborne

FAERIE QUEENE.

As the Prince de Condé with his victorious troops penetrated into the centre of Franche Comté, success still attended his arms; until, as he was proceeding by slow marches to join the army under the personal command of Louis, he received information that a large body of the imperial troops, headed by the Duke of Lorraine, threatened by its approach to prevent the junction of the French armies, and to throw a strong reinforcement into the

town of Dol, which it was the intention of Louis to besiege. To render the Duke's design ineffectual, Condé thought it advisable to send some officer, possessed of sufficient intrepidity and address to carry him through a country occupied by the enemy, for the purpose of acquainting the King with the danger of his situation, and to show the necessity of an immediate union of the French forces. After a few minutes reflection the Prince found none of his followers who, like Mellidor, were gifted at once with the inclination to undertake, and the power to execute this honorable but hazardous enterprise; for to his prudence the secret might safely be confided, and on his activity reliance might be placed for efficient expedition. No sooner had the General communicated to him the occasion which called for his services than, mounting his fleetest horse, he buried the papers, with which he

was intrusted, in his bosom, from whence he resolved that neither artifice nor force should extort them.

In the hope of reaching Dijon before night was far advanced he slackened not his pace, though twilight had already yielded to darkness when he drew near to the forest, the outskirts of which he was obliged to pass. It was winter: the trees, divested of their foliage, concealed not the narrow path which led to Dijon; but the piercing wind, murmuring through their naked branches, inspired a feeling of melancholy, while the distant howlings of wild beasts might have suggested to a mind, and excited in a breast, less intrepid than Mellidor's, the presence of danger and the trepidation of alarm.

Having nearly passed the limits of the forest, the sound of shrieks suddenly shocked his ear; and, in those

times when the age of chivalry was not yet passed, the cries of the distressed could not be heard by the brave without rousing their compassion and commanding their assistance. Checking, therefore, his horse, he perceived that the screams rapidly approached, nor was he long in suspense as to the object from whom they proceeded; for in a few moments he beheld, by the light of a lanthorn which was fastened to his saddle, a female figure whose flying feet announced her to be the victim of some well grounded terror. She was closely followed by a wolf, who, being rendered doubly ferocious by hunger, was pursuing his destined prey with eager haste, when, her foot catching in her robe, she was precipitated to the ground, and would have been left at the mercy of her savage enemy, had not Mellidor's spear, by diverting the course of the monster's fury, turned it

upon himself. A fierce and bloody combat now ensued. Irritated by the wound which he had received, the wolf fastened on the horse's neck, who, by his plunging and rearing, threw his rider to the ground. Instantly springing on his feet, he pierced the wolf in the back; and when, with rage redoubled by the bloody wounds which Mellidor had inflicted, the animal turned with the expectation of seizing him, the young hero caught him by the throat, and held him in his strong grasp until, with horrid convulsions, he expired. The victory being gained, he took off part of his dress, which he applied to his horse's bleeding neck, until further assistance could be procured to heal the wounds of the suffering animal.

Mellidor next sought for the lady whose life his timely interference had thus saved, and whom he now beheld,

recovered from the state of insensibility into which her alarm had thrown her, standing trembling by his side, and gazing with mute astonishment on his majestic figure. The light shone directly on her face, and discovered to him features of so much beauty, and a countenance of so much interest, that feelings, to which he had as yet been a stranger, were livelily excited in his bosom. With a look of tenderness he took her hand, and with a tone of gentleness he assured her that all danger was now passed, and that her fears might be pacified while he was by her side, and able to protect her.

The lady replied, "To your courage and presence of mind, generous stranger, I am indebted for my existence; nor is it in my power to offer you any return, except the unfeigned gratitude of a sensitive heart: but it would gratify me if, during the course

of a life which you have preserved, any opportunity should enable me to requite an obligation of such infinite magnitude. Suffer me, however, to lead you to my castle, where, though your dress convinces me that you are in the service of Louis, you will be secure of a hospitable reception.

Scarcely had the incognita finished speaking when several lights appeared suddenly at a distance, a circumstance which she explained by saying that her attendants, probably alarmed by her absence, had left the house for the purpose of seeking her, and added, " If we bend our steps towards those lights, we shall be conducted to my abode."

Interested by her countenance, pleased with her manners, and delighted by her conversation, Mellidor followed the fair unknown, who explained to

him as they walked along, that, being obliged to visit a sick friend in the neighbourhood, she was detained until a later hour than she had expected; but that thinking that there was still sufficient light to enable her to return home, she had left the house with only one female attendant: that they had scarcely advanced towards the forest, when a wolf, springing from its covert, had put her attendant to flight, and was pursuing herself with rapidity when his timely interference delivered her from her imminent danger.

"If," said Mellidor, "you feel no bad effects from the terror to which you have been exposed, I shall consider myself particularly fortunate in the opportunity which has been indulged to me of preserving you." The look which accompanied these words imparted to them more significancy and importance than seemed properly to belong to them.

The lady and her knight were now met by several persons carrying torches, who, feeling the most anxious solicitude about the fate of their mistress (whose danger had been made known to them by the alarmed attendant) expressed the warmest delight on seeing her return in safety. While, with an air of gentle authority, she was giving directions to some of them respecting Mellidor's horse, he had leisure to survey the ancient and magnificent castle which the blaze of torches now rendered conspicuous. Bursting from the bosom of lofty trees, it raised its embattled towers, and frowned with gloomy majesty upon the smiling valley extended beneath its feet.

The sentinels pacing the drawbridge with measured steps, the artillery appearing at the open bastions, the roll of the drum assembling the distant soldiers, and the glitter of arms, borne

by those who were performing the duties of the watchtower, excited Mellidor's surprise, and convinced him that he was going to enter a castle fortified and garrisoned by the enemy to the house of Bourbon. He recollected that he was the trusted bearer of important despatches, and a momentary fear of treachery shot through his soul, and animated the penetrating glance which he directed to his fair companion. Her fine unruffled countenance and dignified air, as followed by her domestics she conducted him into the castle, immediately, however, banished every feeling of distrust from a breast unaccustomed to suspicion; and soon, by the light in the saloon, he was enabled to form a still more accurate idea of the fine person of his lovely entertainer. If the glimpse, which he had before caught of her countenance, had excited his interest, the full disclosure

of her charms completed the effect of the fascination. Her long dark tresses, escaped from the myrtle wreath which had encircled them, fell abundantly and in disorder over her satin robe. Her light and airy figure could, when the occasion demanded it, assume a dignity which was not its common or leading characteristic; and her commanding countenance, where a slight degree of haughtiness mingled with the prevailing qualities of intellect and sweetness, awed the audacity of the vicious, but engaged the admiration of the virtuous. Compelled, however, to break off these interesting observations, he mentioned the cause that rendered his immediate departure necessary; and, leaving his horse to her care, he requested that one might be lent to enable him to pursue his journey without delay.

Having ordered one of the atten-

dants, who still remained in the room, to prepare a steed, she addressed the youthful hero in the following manner: " Stranger, you are going to join the army, and it is probable that we may never meet again; but, if your reception at this castle has made any impression on your mind, oh! add to the obligations which you have already heaped upon me, one still greater, infinitely greater than all the rest; and when the contending hosts meet in battle, should the arms of Louis be crowned with success, remember Lemira de Lorraine, be merciful as you are brave, and save, if it be possible, the life of her beloved father!"—" Oh heaven," he cried, " when I lead on my troops to battle, the idea of involving the ruin of the father of Lemira, in the consequences of our victory, will chill my ardor in the field, and will induce me to wish almost for defeat! Yes, lovely Princess! I swear

that no danger shall reach the Duke of Lorraine, if my arm be not deprived of its force, or my tongue of its persuasion." Pressing her hand respectfully to his lips, he took a bracelet from her arm, which he placed upon his own, and, then mounting his horse, he set off at full speed; and reached the encampment of Louis, before the monarch had yet retired to rest, and was still conversing with a few of his general officers on the important business of the war.

The sentinels having communicated the arrival of the messenger, he was instantly admitted to the presence of the King, who, having read the despatch, addressed the young hero in the following words: "What the Prince de Condé has said of your character assures me that the greatest reward you can receive is the consciousness of your having saved the

army, by your courage, activity, and address; but, for the purpose of animating my officers to follow so bright an example, I promote you to the rank of colonel, and shall retain you near my person until an opportunity occurs to enable you to rejoin your great commander." Those officers, who had retired to the uncertain repose of a soldier's bed, were now awakened by the sudden and spirit-stirring sound of the drum which beat to arms; and Mellidor, flying from tent to tent, animated the men with the hopes of victory, and, urging with the ardor of youth the necessity of their instant departure, assisted all with his advice, and inspirited all with his example.

CHAP. V.

We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else outfrown false fortune's frown.

SHAKSPEARE.

No sooner was every preparation completed than the army began their silent but rapid march; and, having met the Prince de Condé's troops as the sun was beginning to shed its influence over the earth, they proceeded with the whole strength of the united forces towards the town of Dol; and when they had arrived within a few miles from this place, the army received an order to halt, and await in order of battle, behind the concealment of an

intercepting hill, the arrival of the Duke of Lorraine. Full of spirits, and little expecting the enemy which they were to encounter, the imperialists advanced; nor perceived, until it was too late to retreat, the whole French army drawn up in battle array, and disclosing an extended body of formidable opposition.

A command to attack the enemy was instantly given by Louis; and while the imperial troops, surprised, disappointed, and fatigued with their long march, were easily surrounded, the Duke of Lorraine, reproaching his troops with cowardice, and calling to those who wished to recover their lost fame to follow him, attempted to force a passage through the enemy, in the hope of regaining his honor, or at least his liberty. Instigated by this desperate idea, he rashly advanced too far, and, being so completely encom-

passed as to render his arms useless, a sword was pointed at his breast, which would have put an immediate termination to his existence, had not Mellidor, darting to the spot, arrested the arm of the soldier, and commanded him, with a frown of authority, not to disgrace the honor of victory with the guilt of cruelty. The soldier's instant retreat restored to the Duke the liberty of drawing his sword, which, after surveying Mellidor for some time, he presented to him, accompanied with these words: "Go, young man! and boast, that to you the Duke of Lorraine did not hesitate to resign his sword and his liberty, for he has seen glory still follow your towering plume, and humanity attend on your steps."

To this flattering speech Mellidor replied by assuring the Prince, that he should be treated with every honor

which his character merited, and which misfortune ought always to command.

The imperial army, seeing their general a prisoner, and themselves surrounded, were obliged to lay down their arms and submit to the clemency of the enemy, who now retired with their captives from the field.

Having conducted the Duke to his tent, and directed his officers and men to pay him those honors which were due to his rank and talents, Mellidor flew to the Prince de Condé, whom he found issuing the orders which he had just received from the King, for the commencement of the siege of Dol, on the following day. "I beg one minute's audience of your Royal Highness," he said, while the urgency of his business was explained by the quickness of his voice, and the animation of his countenance. The Prince,

taking him by the arm, withdrew with him to a retired part of the camp, and then, softening the fire of his ardent eyes into the look of approbation, he said, "Have you any request to ask, which it is possible for me to grant? Speak, gallant young man, and, if it be in my power to serve you, depend upon my friendship."

"Although," replied Mellidor, "you alone are not able to bestow on me the favor which I am going to ask, yet I feel so much confidence in your generosity, and am so well assured of the strength of your interest with the King, that I do not hesitate to implore you to obtain from him the liberty of the Duke of Lorraine." The Prince looked surprised, and, fixing his searching eyes on Mellidor, he exclaimed, "Are you aware of the importance of this request? and that it will be more difficult for you to obtain this of

Louis than any other favor which you could demand? Are you sensible that this Prince has caused a greater expenditure of French blood and French money than all the other enemies of our country? that the Emperor could not have acquired kingdoms, or even retained his crown, without the aid of the Duke's talents as a general, and the assistance of the troops of Lorraine?"

"When I applied to your Highness for his liberty, I was conscious of the difficulties attending the undertaking: but listen, I implore you, to my story. When, sent by you with despatches to the King, I was surprised by the night, and was received at a castle of the Duke's with an hospitality which I shall never forget, and to the Princess, into whose power without knowing her, I had incautiously thrown myself and who had consequently the disposal of my freedom, I then made

a promise to employ all my power to save her father's life, and all my interest to procure his liberty, if either his life or his liberty should be brought by the fortune of battle into danger. She not only entertained and relieved me, but when my own horse was unable to convey me any further, she supplied me with the best charger in her father's stables, and thus lent me the means of fulfilling my mission: Oh then!" he continued, with increased warmth, "let not the shrill blast of war silence the voice of mercy in the victor's breast; but let your generosity be powerfully exerted to plead with me the cause of beauty and merit, mourning for the captivity of a valiant father. Deprive me not of the opportunity to be grateful, refuse me not the means of discharging a substantial debt."

"Come," said the Prince, smiling, "I will go with you to the King, who

cannot refuse to grant your petition in favor of beauty and merit; for my young cousin knows, as you do, how to wreathe the myrtles of love with the laurels of glory."

Although, not quite pleased with the insinuation conveyed by these words, Mellidor followed Condé to the King, whom they found preparing to refresh himself after the toils of the day, with those luxuries with which in these expeditions the royal tent was always most affluently supplied.

"Sire," said Condé, "I am come to introduce to your Majesty my young friend the Marquis de Valmire, with whose worth you are already acquainted; and to whose high destiny it has fallen to take the Duke of Lorraine prisoner. He is going to make your Majesty a petition, the importance of which I have explained to

him; but neither the dread of incurring your displeasure, nor the difficulty of obtaining his request, can induce him to abandon the undertaking."

"I should seem envious of merit, and a discourager of valour," replied Louis, "if I did not hear, and, if possible, grant his petition." Mellidor now approached, and, bending his knee, exclaimed, "Liberty, Sire, for the Duke of Lorraine!"

Condé's surprise, when the subject was first mentioned to him, was slight when compared to that which Louis now evinced. Starting back, he eyed Mellidor for some time in silence; but, seeing the dauntless intrepidity of innocence on his countenance, admiration succeeded to astonishment, and he answered with a softened manner, "Your request is of such magnitude, that to comply with it would

at least endanger all the triumphs of my arms, and perhaps bring the very existence of my empire into question."

"The Duke, Sire, can be bound by ties of honor not to engage, by direct or indirect measures, in any war offensive to your Majesty; and was I possessed of any thing sufficiently valuable, I would most joyfully sacrifice it as a hostage for his fidelity, for my obligations to his family are not of a doubtful nature."

Here Mellidor, having related the circumstances which he had before explained to the Prince, ended by saying, "Sire, you are not inaccessible to the tears of beauty: with a lenient hand then wipe away those which are shed by the Princess for the fate of an only parent! your admiration, Sire, is excited by deeds of

heroism: honor them then even when performed by an enemy, and, satisfied with the generosity of your motives, regard not the consequences, but give freedom to the Duke of Lorraine!"

"Go!" answered the Monarch, as well pleased with his own magnanimity as with the courage of the young pleader, "I authorise you to give him freedom, on the conditions which you have yourself prescribed; and let a strong escort attend him to his castle. See," he said, turning to Condé and to the officers who surrounded him, "see that this order is obeyed: but to Valmire alone I yield the pleasure of liberating his prisoner."

Mellidor again bent the knee; and, pouring forth the warmest effusions of gratitude, departed, with a mind elate with joy, to find the Duke; whom he addressed in the following words;

"To dry the tears which your lovely daughter sheds for your absence, I am permitted by the King to restore to you your sword and your liberty; but the duty which he owes to himself and to his people forbids him to give unconditional freedom to a Prince, who has discovered himself to be their constant, powerful, and inveterate enemy. Unless, therefore, you are engaged, by your honor, to remain quietly at your castle until the expiration of the war; and not again to enter the field against France, I shall, by my promise to the King, be compelled to refuse you that liberty which my nature prompts me to restore."

"Yes!" cried the Prince, "you seem to have acquired by your conduct the right of obliging the Duke of Lorraine, whose pride will never bend to be indebted for his freedom to any of the race of Bourbon. To you I

give, though with reluctance, the promise which you request." A body of horse was now despatched to escort the Duke to his castle; and the army, having taken some repose, proceeded to besiege Dol. No sooner was an opening made in the wall than a party of young noblemen, headed by the ardent Mellidor, rushed into the streets; and, being supported by the cooler judgment and greater experience of Condé, compelled the city to yield, after a siege of four days, to the victorious arms of the French Monarch.

Franche Comté being thus rapidly reduced, Louis conducted his army to Paris, whither Mellidor was obliged, by a letter from the Vicomte, to accompany his sovereign, though the tender feelings of his heart inclined him, in the first instance, to visit the Princess, and to offer her consolation

under those distresses to which the gloomy revenge of the late King and the inflexible pride of her father had exposed her. And here it will be necessary to explain the nature of those distresses, and to impart to the reader some idea of the character of this Prince, who supported an eminent part on the theatre of those times.

Being nephew to Henri the last Duke, Charles acquired his estates, and the sovereignty of the Duchy, by an union with the daughter and heiress of his uncle. This Princess dying without children, Louis the Thirteenth endeavoured to induce him to settle his dominions on his nephew, to the prejudice of the child of a second marriage which the Duke had contracted soon after the death of his first consort. By refusing, with his accustomed haughtiness, to submit to the will of the arbitrary mo-

narch, he consulted rather his feelings of paternal affection, which would not allow him to deprive his daughter of her inheritance, and of his pride, which could not brook the command of a superior, than the dictates of his interest, which strongly inclined him to comply with the wishes of a neighbouring, a potent, and an ambitious King: and the Duke was soon made sensible, that his refusal in this instance was only employed by Louis as a pretext to cover the real cause of his displeasure: a cause which, originating in the exercise of the Duke's virtues, was construed by the jealous and gloomy disposition of the Monarch into indignity and affront.

The Duke of Orleans, flying from the wrath of his brother, sought refuge in the court of Lorraine; where he was received, not in the manner which cold policy might have suggest-

ed to its Duke, but with a hospitality which marked at once his generous but imprudent character; and by disdaining to seek his own safety by an act of treachery, and by not refusing his consent to the union of his sister with this Prince, he drew on himself the displeasure of Louis, which ended only with his existence. Louis, however, wishing to maintain the appearance of justice, again made his former proposition. But it was couched in terms that irritated the too irascible pride of the Duke, and, inducing him to embrace the cause of the Emperor, united against the King the whole military force of Lorraine, together with the talents and valor of its Prince. The absence of Charles gave Louis an opportunity of entering his Dutchy with a large army, and seizing on part of his possessions.

As the imprudent Charles persisted,

during the lapse of several years, in his opposition to the French King, this monarch from time to time despoiled his opponent of all his estates, and compelled him to seek protection from the Spanish branch of the house of Austria. Lemira, born in exile, continued to share her royal father's retreat at Brussels, where, dividing his time between glory and pleasure, he supported, by means of the treasures which he had carried from his own country, those troops so distinguished for valor and for attachment to their general, together with a court almost as splendid and as luxurious as that of Lorraine. Tranquillity was not, however, long a guest in the palace of the royal exile; for the King of Spain, becoming jealous of the glory acquired by his brave ally, and suspicious lest he should meditate a reconciliation with Louis, commanded the Comte de Fuensaldagne, governor

of Flanders, to arrest the Duke, and cause him to be conveyed, under a strong escort, to the castle of Toledo, where he was imprisoned during the lapse of several years. The prospect of a long and rigorous captivity could neither daunt the spirit of Charles, nor deprive him of that gay and laughing humour for which he was so remarkable. History informs us, that, as the soldiers were conveying him through Angers, he perceived on the road a Spaniard with a frightful countenance, to whom calling out aloud, he said, that he was travelling to the land of monkeys, from whence he should be happy to send to him some news of his relations. Thus did the lively temper of this great man throw a ray of sunshine over an event at once deplorable for himself and ruinous to his people.

During the long captivity of the

Duke Charles, Lemira's education was commenced under the auspices of her uncle Francois, whose amiable and generous disposition induced him to bestow on her an equal share of kindness and attention with his own children.

The death of Louis the Thirteenth and the accession of his son to the throne did not at first produce any beneficial change in the affairs of the unfortunate Duke: but at length the general amnesty, commonly known as the peace of the Pyrenees, restored to him his dominions under certain restrictions; and he again entered Lorraine amid the joyous acclamations of his subjects.

The devotion of the people of Lorraine to their sovereigns was only inferior to that which they felt for their religion; and, on the return of their

injured Duke, they endeavoured to surpass each other in demonstrations of delight and affection.

Receiving lessons of wisdom from the lips of her father, and examples of fortitude and heroism from his conduct, Lemira gave early proof that she was not unmindful of his instruction, or unworthy of her glorious descent from a long line of kings and of heroes. Daily improving in beauty and excellence, she continued to preside at the court of Lorraine, where Charles delighted to see her the magnet of attraction, the object of admiration, the dispenser of benefits; and while the ancient chivalry and noblesse of Lorraine made her the goddess of their idolatry, the Duke was pleased to observe that Lemira's heart was untouched by their attentions, and that she rejected without hesitation every offer of marriage which had yet been

made to her. To retain with him his darling, the object of his pride and of his fondest affection, he made his court the seat of pleasure and of gaiety. Balls, masquerades, tournaments, and carousals followed one another in rapid and gay succession; while the youthful knights and nobles of her father's kingdom were excited to excellence in the lists, and in every feat of arms, by the hope of receiving the prize from the hands of the Princess of Lorraine.

Charles, who, at the age of sixty-four, not only enjoyed full vigor of body and mind, but who excelled the most active of his nobility in the exercises of the field, the deeds of chivalry, and the sports of the ball room, mingled with his usual sprightliness in all the pleasures of his court; and, relying on the faith of Louis, whose remonstrances on the subject were re-

peated, dismissed his army with the exception of his light-horse, and foresaw not the storm which was soon to burst upon his head.

While the people of Lorraine were lulled in security, the French troops, under the command of the Marquis de Fourille, suddenly appeared in the wood Haie, which ends at a quarter of a league from the town of Nanci, intending to enter this city at the dawn of day; and, surprising the town, to seize on the person of the Duke. The guides, however, either through ignorance or treachery, misled the invaders; and morning was already advanced when the Marquis de Fourille found himself with his army at the mouth of the forest. Being thus frustrated in their expectation of taking the Duke before he quitted his bed in the morning, the Marquis lingered in the wood until eleven o'clock, supposing that he should then find his

victim at the hour of his repast. Happily, however, for Charles, he had dined earlier than usual in order to enjoy the exercise of the chase; and when the French forces thundered at the gate of the palace, Lemira alone appeared on the balcony to ascertain the cause of the riot. Far as her quick eye could penetrate she beheld the streets lined by the French soldiers; and, while every avenue to escape was barricadoed, a part of the invaders was employed in forcing an entrance into her father's palace. The Princess immediately perceived that inevitable ruin awaited her father's fortunes; for, to attempt to defend the palace against that host of foes, which now assailed it, would only occasion an expenditure of human life, without giving her the smallest chance of ultimate success.

Anxiety respecting the safety of Charles was the most painful feeling

of her mind; and next in order were her alarm for his property and her grief for his misfortunes. Assuming, however, that calm and commanding look which she found generally met with attention, she demanded by what authority they dared to invade the palace of the Duke of Lorraine, and for what purpose they proceeded with so much violence.

The Marquis de Fourille replied, that they acted by the orders of the King of France, who had despatched them to seize on the person of the Duke, for which purpose they insisted on admission. Instead, however, of instantly complying with the peremptory demand of the general, Lemira ordered the gates to be more strongly barricadoed; while, through a secret pass at the back part of the building, she despatched a messenger to the Duke to inform him of the attack, and

to entreat him to escape into the mountains of Vosges. The Princess then returned to the balcony, imploring the Marquis to moderate the violence of his troops, and to allow her the liberty of quitting the palace to throw herself into Epinal: but all she could obtain was permission to retire into the convent of the nuns of the visitation, on condition that she would submit to have her coach searched after her entrance into it, in order to ascertain that she carried with her no articles of value. To gain time Lemira agreed to submit to this humiliating arrangement: but the French, becoming every moment more enraged at the obstacles which were opposed to their entrance, threatened to bring artillery to effect the destruction of the palace. No menaces could, however, induce the heroic Princess to admit the troops until informed of her father's safety: she then com-

manded the doors to be thrown open, and the soldiers entered to seek in vain for the object of their pursuit. Enraged at finding that the time which they had wasted in a fruitless parley, and in an attempt to storm the palace, had been employed by the Duke to carry him beyond their power, they wreaked their vengeance on the magnificent furniture and pictures which adorned the mansion of the Lorraine princes. Having stripped it of every article of value, they seized the treasures and the papers of the Duke; and, that no indignity to this great Prince might be spared, the Marquis de Fourille stabled his horses in those halls where nobles had feasted, and where beauty had smiled.

In the meantime the unfortunate Princess, fallen from the pinnacle of glory, and deprived of every thing except that greatness of mind which is

displayed more strongly in the dreary walks of adversity than in the flowery fields of prosperity, had sought refuge from the brutality of the soldiers in the convent of the nuns of visitation.

The Abbess of this religious house received the daughter of her sovereign with respect and affection; and readily agreed to give her assistance to Lemira's plan of escaping to the mountains of Vosges. A favourable opportunity soon occurred of enabling this lovely girl to quit her holy retreat for the purpose of sharing the dangers and miseries of her revered parent.

Colonel Belrose, who had been sent by the exiled Charles to attempt some negotiation with the Marquis de Crequi, now commanding in Nanci, at the head of an army of twenty-six thousand men, visited Lemira at the convent, and pledged himself to effect

her freedom, provided she would condescend to embrace the means necessary for that purpose. Lemira, having consented to the plan proposed by the Colonel, impatiently awaited his arrival; and, while her delicate person, ill suited the masculine attire which she was obliged to assume, her courage seemed to augment as her hopes of seeing her father increased.

Evening began to tinge the western sky with red, when Belrose appeared with his footboy at the gates of the convent, and, having remained within its walls until night lent its veil to cover his design, he quitted the house, accompanied by the Princess carrying his torch. As they passed the sentinels on duty, Belrose affected to be angry with her for holding the lights so ill, and even sometimes lifted up his cane in act to strike the disguised beauty. Having at last passed through

the streets of Nanci, they arrived in safety in the open country, where two fleet coursers and several gentlemen of Lorraine, desirous of rejoining their Duke, awaited them. The Princess sprang into the saddle, and, accompanied by her knights, set off at full speed. Unaccustomed, however, to exercise so violent, the Princess, who would not relax her pace, though almost fainting from fatigue, was obliged to submit to allow a person to mount on the crupper of her horse in order to support her in the saddle, until their rapid pace at length brought them to the mountain of Vosges.

Charles received his daughter with a delight which compensated her for all her fatigues and dangers; and, to partake with her beloved father his alarms and difficulties was to her affectionate heart a source of consolation. While this high minded but un-

fortunate pair wandered in the fortresses of the mountains, not daring to sleep two nights in the same place, lest their persons should fall into the power of the victor, the people of Lorraine, at the hazard of their lives, supplied them, together with the troops and nobles, who continually flocked round the standard of their sovereign, with provisions and necessaries of every kind. The arrival of the Duke's company of guards, and that of his light-horse, which had chosen a favourable moment to desert from the army of the Marquis of Crequi, again placed Charles at the head of a force, not indeed sufficiently numerous to enable him to attempt, with any prospect of success, his reestablishment on the throne of his ancestors, but of consequence enough to render his alliance worth purchasing by the sovereigns of Europe; who viewed, with no friendly eye, the increasing power of the ambitious Monarch of France.

A General, who was never unsuccessful but when his talents were exerted in defence of his own estates, was eagerly sought after by the Emperor, to whom his faith was pledged, and whose army he bravely commanded.

The Princess Lemira solicited and obtained permission from the King of France to retire into the castle in the neighbourhood of Dijon, which, with the surrounding domain, was all that remained to the Duke of his dominions. Having been the constant companion of all her father's wanderings, and the sharer of all his misfortunes, Lemira had of course imbibed the strong feeling of filial love, which the conduct of her father, by relinquishing his present fortune rather than sacrifice her future interests, exalted into grateful and enthusiastic admiration. The Duke's visits at the castle, which were as frequent as his duty to the

Emperor would permit, were received by her with a joy proportioned to her sorrow at his departure; and, while with tears she implored him to recover his possessions by an entire submission to the will of Louis, she endeavoured by her prudence and her talents to conciliate his enemies, and to save the wreck of his fortunes. Wit, valor, a happy pliability of manner, a perfect knowledge of the world, were in him combined with pride without fierceness, and generosity without ostentation.

The Princess's gratitude to the young hero, who had given life and liberty to such a father, may be easily conceived; and, as her happiness on the Duke's return was constantly mingled with the recollection of the person to whom she was indebted for it, she found that her thoughts more commonly deviated into this track than into any other.

Unfortunately, however, afflictions, severe in their nature and dreadful in their result, now demanded all her attention; and again called forth all the fortitude of her great soul to enable her to meet them without sinking under their pressure. But, as an explanation of these events is not here immediately necessary, we shall return to Mellidor whom we quitted on his arrival at Paris.

CHAP. VI.

Oh scene of horror, and of wild despair,
Why is the rich Atrides' splendid heir
Constrain'd to quit his ancient lordly seat,
And hide his glories in a mean retreat?
Why that drawn sword? and whence that dismal cry?
Why pale distraction through the family?
Why that gay son to distant regions sent?
What fiends that daughter's destined match prevent?
Why the whole house in sudden ruin laid?
Oh nothing but last night—my lady play'd.

YOUNG.

AFTER the embrace with which the Vicomte welcomed his son, he observed a deep melancholy preying on his father's spirits, nor did he long suffer Mellidor to remain ignorant of the cause of his dejection; for, sending

for him into his library on the day after his arrival, he addressed him in the following manner;

"You must be conscious, Mellidor, that I have hitherto performed towards you all the duties of a parent, with the most unremitting attention, and the most unwearied vigilance; that while I fostered with care every virtue, I punished with severity every fault; and, rendering your mind less accessible to the inroads of vice by storing its capacity with learning and morality, I conducted you by degrees to that perfection to which you have at last attained. Your first essay in life has been happily crowned with success; and you have returned, after a short but dangerous conflict, with wounds obtained in a glorious cause, and with a mind which has discovered itself to be superior to temptations. To the care which has been taken to direct

your inclinations into a proper course of action is this to be ascribed, rather than to the natural goodness of your disposition; for we have frequently seen that nature, unenlightened by education, scarcely exalts the reason of a man above the instinct of a brute. But my anxiety for your welfare does not terminate with your education; for I have still an important duty to perform, which will be soon adjusted according to my wishes, if you do not oppose your own happiness. I allude to your union with a lady of large fortune, from whose father I have just received proposals for you." As he concluded this speech his dark eyes were fixed on Mellidor's face, whose sudden start and pale countenance discovered that the subject was to him as unpleasing as it was unexpected. "What is the occasion of this emotion?" asked the Vicomte, with anxiety,

"Does the aversion to my proposal which your countenance betrays proceed from a preengagement of your affections? or are you," he added, with a contracted brow, "engaged in some intrigue which you blush to confess? or has innocence suffered from your seductions? if you have been guilty of the latter crime, you must indeed repair it at the altar, for never shall your principle bend to the suggestions of your pride."

"No, my Sire!" exclaimed Mellidor, the indignant blood returning to his cheek at the unjust suspicion, "no, Sire, my heart is as free from guilt as my lips are from falsehood; but I confess your proposition has excited my surprise and uneasiness, and, as you cannot be so ignorant of the gratitude which glows within my breast as to attribute my answer to

unthankfulness, I must entreat your pardon if I decline this last instance of your affection."

"Nothing can excuse your undutiful reply," answered the Vicomte, "except the previous engagement of your heart."

Mellidor blushed, but remained silent.

"Mellidor," said the father, in a softer tone than he had ever before assumed towards his son, "will you not confide to your best of friends the object of your attachment?" Mellidor could not deny the first request which his father had ever condescended to make; and yet would not his passion for a person whom he had seen but once be a subject of ridicule to the reasonable Vicomte? While these reflections were passing in the

young nobleman's mind, the appeal to his filial feelings was renewed by the Vicomte, who added in a voice tremulous with fear;

" Boy, boy! I tremble lest the woman, for whom you have refused my offer, is of a character which induces you to dread the disclosure of her name!"

Roused by a supposition so degrading to his choice, Mellidor started up, and erected his towering figure which seemed to expand with indignant pride, while his countenance became fixed on his father's.

" In the election which my heart has made," he said, " my principles and my pride are equally secured by the virtue and the noble birth of the object, to whom my affections are devoted; nor need I blush to acknow-

ledge that that object is the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine."

"If indeed your choice is so noble," replied the Vicomte, "it gives me the more sorrow to be obliged to say that it can never be attended with success. The Duke is ruined. The greater part of his estates have been confiscated, and the remainder have been seized for the discharge of his debts."

"O my Sire!" exclaimed Mellidor, his fine face glowing as he spake, "and will it not be noble to raise the dejected fortunes of the lovely Lemira? to obtain her affections by the generous action of replacing her excellent father in a state of affluence, and to appear to her as a favoured mortal to whom Heaven has confided the blessing of dispensing his benefits." Mellidor paused; and the Vicomte, who was obliged to turn his

head aside to conceal a tear which his son's noble feelings had called into his eye, was a moment without replying.

"Alas, Mellidor," at length he said, "I fear your fate is not so happy. Your fortune is too contracted to allow you to indulge your generous propensities; and, before you can possess even that limited sum which will only enable you to support existence, your beloved sister must be deprived of her fortune, and be led to the altar to take vows from which her heart recoils. That woman," he proceeded, as Mellidor's surprise would not allow him to offer any interruption to his father's speech, "that woman whom I have the misfortune to call wife has, by forging drafts in my name on my banker, deprived me of immense sums; and now when I have taken effectual methods to prevent her future extravagancies, the

sudden disappearance of a person to whom I had entrusted my money, until I could employ it in the purchase of landed property, has reduced me to actual distress. Nothing remains but your estate in Languedoc, which before my second marriage was too small to support my family. Rosalie's fate is therefore determined, unless, by the acceptance of the fortune which I have offered him, Mellidor will rescue his sister from a cloister, and his father from indigence."

The Vicomte, perceiving that he had made a deep impression on his son, paused to await his reply; while, with his face concealed by his hand which rested on the table, Mellidor appeared plunged in meditation. At last starting up he exclaimed, "O my honored father! my beloved Rosalie! I cannot suffer you to be the victims! Yes, Sire! I resign myself into your

hands: dispose of my destiny as you think fit!"

The Vicomte embraced his son with enthusiasm; and, perceiving that his feelings were now too much affected to continue the subject, he dismissed him, with a request that he would return at a stated hour on the following day.

CHAP. VII.

Ah! si, par mon devoir forcé de vous quitter,
Tout mon amour alors ne pût pas éclater,
Ne vous souvient-il plus, sans compter tout le reste,
Combien je me plaignis de ce devoir funeste!

MITHRIDATE.

EMANUEL de St. Amand, from whom the Vicomte received the proposals which he had communicated to his son, practised as gens-de-robe in Dijon, and was likewise a member of the parliament of that city, where his ancestors, who were all of the same profession, had amassed an immense fortune. With manners polite and gentle, a heart, just, benevolent, and liberal; he had, to obscure so many excellences,

but one weakness, which he carried to an excess that rendered his life unhappy. Having the misfortune to be born of ignoble parents, and to be subsequently chosen a member of the Dijon Parliament, he sighed for noble birth with a regret which actually poisoned all his enjoyments, and which induced him to seek eagerly for an alliance with a person of rank, that his children might derive nobility from at least one parent.

The pride of the ancient French noblesse not allowing them to condescend to a connexion with an *avocat*, however superior he might be to them in the possession of fortune, he sought in England what was refused to him in his native country; and it was in the former place that he found Lady Caroline Merton, the daughter of an Earl whose gambling had so much reduced his fortune as to make him, in

a country where beauty is less esteemed than riches, accept with joy St. Amand's proposal for the youngest of his numerous children.

Three years had scarcely elapsed since their marriage, when Lady Caroline, who had given birth to a daughter, was attacked by a consumption, a complaint with which she had been frequently threatened. With the anxiety of a fond husband, St. Amand immediately removed her to Montpellier; where the Vicomte de Valmire had likewise brought his first wife, whose health, being in a declining state, required the salubrious atmosphere of that beautiful city.

The different manners of the men, and the Vicomte's pride for some time precluded an acquaintance from being formed between them: but the similarity of their present feelings and si-

tuation, united with St. Amand's never ceasing attentions to the Vicomtesse, removed at last every obstacle to their intercourse, and they met on terms of equality and friendship.

One day as St. Amand was contemplating Mellidor and Mellanie, who, being nearly of the same age, were then pursuing their infant sports in the room, he was struck with the idea of indulging his favorite object by a future union between his child and the young Marquis, and though the absurdity could not escape him of fostering the idea of a marriage between two children at that time not more than three years old, which so many events altogether beyond his control might interpose to disappoint, yet he continued to cherish it; and, favoured by the distressed state of the Vicomte's fortune, he was at length enabled to carry it into effect.

His wife, Lady Caroline, had fallen a victim to her fatal malady; and his family had now long since removed to a distance from that of the Vicomte: but his wealth and the nobleman's indigence were uniting circumstances; and a communication was opened between them, whilst the pride of one was lessened, and the confidence of the other proportionably increased.

No sooner had the Vicomte received Mellidor's assent to his wishes, than he wrote to St. Amand expressing his acceptance of his proposal, and adding that his son should lose no time in appearing at Dijon to pay his addresses to Mademoiselle St. Amand.

Mellidor had not much leisure to meditate on the impending change in his destiny; for his servant Bernard, to whom he was obliged to have re-

course for the purpose of assisting him in making preparations for his journey, was too eager to acquaint his Lord with the events which had occurred during his absence, to allow him to indulge his own thoughts.

"Monseigneur!" began the talkative valet, "how much the alteration in this family has surprised me!"

"To what alteration do you allude?" inquired Mellidor, fearing that he had discovered the Vicomte's distresses.

"To the removal of Madame la Vicomtesse," he replied, "who has at last been punished for tormenting every body, by being confined in the Chateau Meillant; which, I suppose, you know, Monseigneur, is a strong castle in the province of Berry. They say she can never get out again to plague her poor servants with her caprices."

Mellidor silenced his loquacity with a severe look; for, knowing as he did the true cause of the Vicomtesse's confinement, and that her father was anxious to conceal it from the world, he would not indulge Bernard's freedom of tongue. But in a few minutes the valet, willing to excuse what he had said, again broke silence by saying;

"I am sure, Monseigneur, you have no reason to be angry with me for speaking so freely of the Vicomtesse, who always behaved worse to you than she did to other people; and the lettre de cachet, which has taken her away, ought to give Monseigneur as much pleasure as it does his humble servant."

"You must allow me to be the best judge of that, Bernard," answered Mellidor. "But the Vicomtesse is my father's wife, and I shall expect

my servants to treat her with respect." These words were accompanied by a look of such command, that they completely frightened poor Bernard into silence.

On the next day when Mellidor attended his father, he explained the circumstances of his acquaintance with St. Amand, as we have before related them. The Vicomte likewise conjured him to hasten the preparations for his expedition into Burgundy; and offered to supply him, out of the small sum which still remained in his hands, with an equipage, to appear before his intended bride. But Mellidor refused to spend in ostentation any part of what his father must require for his necessary support; and he, therefore, departed in a few days on horseback, attended only by Bernard and a groom; and, paying his sister at St. Maure a visit on his way, for the purpose of

liberating her from her confinement, he proceeded across the country to Loches, then pursuing the course of the river Indre, he did not slacken his pace until he arrived at Chatillon. Here he stopped to take some refreshment; and, being obliged to travel slowly on account of his horses, he determined to see every thing that was curious on his road to Dijon. Anxious to banish from his mind, by the power of reason, the idea of Lemira, he would frequently exclaim; "Is it possible that I can be so weak as to suffer the idea of a woman, however lovely, whom I have only once seen, to preserve a dominion over my mind, which will prevent me from loving one to whom I am soon to be united, and who is doubtlessly endued with many amiable and excellent qualities? Forbid it, reason! and forbid it, virtue!"

Being obliged to reach Chateauroux,

a distance of thirty miles before night, he hastened his departure from Chatillon; and on the next day, renewing his journey at an early hour, he crossed the Arnon; and, passing through the small town of Charot, he entered the forest of St. Florentine, and from thence proceeded to the city of Bourges. This town was interesting to the young traveller, because it was the birthplace of two very famous, but opposite characters: of Louis the Eleventh, whose crimes deform the page of the historian; and of the preacher Bourdaloue, whose eloquence was employed in the glorious cause of virtue and morality.

The next place which attracted his attention was the convent of the Benedictine Culinestes, situated in the town of La Charité; the Prior of which assured Mellidor that in a season of scarcity they had supplied the

whole city with provisions. Taking his leave of the Prior of this generous convent, Mellidor continued his route to Nevers, where he arrested his progress to view the ducal palace, in the which John Casimir, King of Poland, had recently expired. He passed the night in this populous city; and, proceeding on the next day through St. Biene and Moulins, he stopped at Bourbon to view the castle; and, wishing to have sufficient time to see Luzy and the curiosities at Autun, he slept at Bourbon; a circumstance at which Bernard, who was heartily tired of traveling, was not a little rejoiced.

Near the town of Luzy, which is situated at the foot of the Vosges, stands an abbey founded by St. Columban. But to Mellidor Autun was the chief object of attention, as it contained, besides many other Roman antiquities, the temples of Janus and Cybele;

and the tomb of the savage Brunehaud, the monster of the sixth century, who for poisoning her son Childebert, and procuring the death of ten kings, was justly punished by being tied to the tail of a wild horse, and thus miserably destroyed.

Having, contrary to the advice of Bernard, quitted Bean rather late in the evening, Mellidor found that he had mistaken the road, and that he had entered the forest of Oemigny, from which he was endeavouring to disengage himself, when night suddenly advanced, accompanied by a tremendous storm; and Mellidor's spirited steed, rendered furious by the lightning, darted forwards through the thickest part of the wood to the great danger of his rider, who was obliged to throw his body flat on the horse's neck, to avoid being caught by the branches which hung over his head.

In this unpleasant posture he proceeded for several miles, at a pace which soon left his attendant at an awful distance; nor, when he had escaped the confines of the forest, could he check the rapid progress of his horse till he had leaped a high wall, and Mellidor discovered to his great surprise that he was within the precincts of a garden. Here the animal stopped, and the young nobleman, leaping from his back, tied him to a tree; and looked around, to endeavour to distinguish objects by the light of the moon, which had now arisen.

He walked through several fine alleys, where the flowering lime diffused a pleasing fragrance, until he saw the chimneys of a house towering above the trees; and towards this place he directed his steps. Having reached the building, he perceived through the long windows a room

brilliantly illuminated and splendidly adorned. As he leaned against the sash the spring yielded to his pressure, and he found himself an involuntary intruder into the house of a stranger. But this thought received a momentary suspension, when his eye caught, sleeping under a crimson canopy, the sight of a female, whose person, at the apparent age of twenty-four, united the blooming softness, which the earliest age can boast, to the fully proportioned beauty of maturer years. To see her asleep was to see her in the most advantageous point of view; for she wanted, when awake, that expression so striking in Lemira's face, which makes the countenance speak the language of the soul; a language which appeals to the heart, while the perfection of feature and complexion is calculated only to dazzle the eye. With Mellidor's admiration of the fair object before him no passion was,

therefore, blended: he viewed her as one of nature's finest works, which, calling for his praise without exciting his love, made no alteration in his ideas or sentiments. Mellidor was both too good and too wise to become enamoured of mere beauty; for he thought, like the Bishop whose pages teem with poetry, " that it is an ill band of affection to tie two hearts together by a little thread of red and white."

While in doubt whether to advance farther into the house, and, making his situation known, beg shelter for the night, he continued to gaze on the lovely female, the loud ringing of a bell determined his doubts by awaking the sleeping beauty. Starting immediately from the sofa, she seemed to regard the majestic figure of the young stranger with alarm; and from this he had scarcely time to

relieve her by declaring his name, and the accident that occasioned his sudden intrusion, when the violent ringing was renewed, and was followed by the entrance of several domestics preceded by a gentleman of a most venerable aspect. With a smiling countenance he extended his hand to Mellidor while he exclaimed, "I am happy to find that your acquaintance with my daughter is already commenced." This speech produced an explanation, and Mellidor was informed that the house, into which he had entered, belonged to St. Amand, and that the beauty, whom he had been contemplating, was no other than his destined bride.

Mellidor's servants having discovered the right road soon after their Lord had quitted them; and, being anxious respecting his fate, deemed it best to ride on as quickly as possible to Monsieur St. Amand's; and, if Mellidor

should not be already arrived, to procure lights to search for him in the forest. When they reached the villa, they were instantly seen by St. Amand, who conducted them into the saloon to debate on the best measures to be pursued; and there he found Mellidor, by whose magnificent figure he acknowledged that all his ideas of the grandeur of a legitimate nobleman were confirmed.

Very considerately supposing that his visitor must be fatigued with his journey, St. Amand insisted upon lighting him to the room which had been prepared for his reception: a proposition which Mellidor, in whom the desire to entertain Mam'selle St. Amand was not sufficiently powerful to repress his inclination to sleep, very joyfully accepted.

CHAP. VIII.

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from Heaven
Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd,
It blesses him that gives, and him that takes.
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

If, to Mellidor's preengaged heart, Melanie's charms offered no temptation to inconstancy, after the first feeling of surprise she was no less indifferent to the effects of his personal accomplishments, a circumstance, which, as it proceeded not from the natural insusceptibility of her mind, will require some further explanation.

About three years before the young Valmire's arrival at Dijon, Melanie

had danced at a ball with Henri Villeron, who, at the age of thirty, having dissipated a large fortune, and, falling deeply in love with Mam'selle St. Amand, was desirous of gratifying his passion, and of replenishing his coffers by an union with one whose great beauty and immense fortune rendered her the object of very general pursuit.

Villeron, whose early vices had been instrumental in causing his mother's death, joined to a quick and penetrating understanding a thorough knowledge of the female heart; to the various tempers of which he so adroitly adapted his mode of attack, that his seductions were thought too powerful to be resisted, and, for a female to be the object of his pursuit, was generally considered as sufficient to insure her eventual ruin. His figure, not being tall, was more formed for

elegance than dignity; and, being possessed of a perfect command of his countenance, he could make that, like his mind, assume any character which might be suited to his purpose. Judging from the well known integrity of the father that Melanie had received a virtuous education, he addressed her with honorable love: but he did not make his purposes known to St. Amand until he had succeeded in obtaining the affections of his daughter, whose reason was not sufficiently strong to guard her heart against the inroads of sudden and violent passion. To Villeron's proposal St. Amand, with the prospect of a noble alliance in his eye, replied by a cold and positive refusal, which, although couched in terms of politeness, gave great offence to the impetuous lover; and, exaggerating it to Melanie, he made it appear like insult and contempt: thus, placing himself in the right and her

father in the wrong, he wrought upon her feelings in his favour, and, forcibly exciting her pity, added strength to her love. When Melanie applied to St. Amand for an explanation of his conduct, he simply replied, that Villeron's bad character was alone sufficient to justify his refusal; and that he should never choose for his beloved girl a man whose disposition was so ill formed for the promotion of her happiness.

Although on this subject Melanie's ideas were in direct opposition to her father's, the extraordinary indolence of her character prevented her from combating his arguments; and as Henri had his secret reasons for not insisting on an immediate marriage, he affected, with consummate art, to praise her filial piety, though it was the cause of misery to himself. This filial piety did not, however, prevent

her from maintaining a correspondence with her lover, nor even from granting him frequent interviews; during which he never failed to increase her affections by soft complaints of her cruelty, and by passionate protestations of his eternal love. By this line of conduct he hoped to feed her flame, until the completion of her twenty-fifth year would emancipate her from the controll of her parent, and would give him possession of her hand with a very large fortune which was then to be necessarily attached to it. Unhappily, however, for him Mellidor stepped in to intercept the self-promised blessing; and, as the object of his journey to Dijon was to be kept a profound secret, it would not have reached Villeron, who was then at a distance, if Melanie had not written to inform him of her situation, and to implore his immediate presence and advice. Secretly determined to avoid an union

with Mellidor by an elopement with Villeron, she thought it not prudent to discover to the former any of that coldness which she actually felt; and, when they met at breakfast on the day following the night of his arrival, she treated him with so much kindness and attention that St. Amand was deceived into the belief that she participated in his joy at the prospect of her marriage with the young Marquis; and, acting on his surmises as if they had been realities, he assured Mellidor of his daughter's affection, and made it so obvious to him that Melanie's happiness depended on his love, that he resolved to comply with the wishes of her father, and to consent that the ceremony should not be postponed beyond the duration of a few days. Melanie heard this decision without feeling any emotion of alarm; for estimating Villeron's distançe from Dijon, she calculated that he would certainly

arrive on the day previous to that on which the marriage was to take place, and that she should thus be enabled to elude, without the trouble of opposition, the event which she deprecated ; and be united to the man from whose society she fondly hoped to derive substantial happiness. Convinced that he would never suffer the object of his affections to be torn from his embrace and be bestowed on another, she allowed the magnificent preparations for the ceremony to proceed without manifesting any appearance of disgust, and she received Mellidor's forced attentions with a modest kindness, which strongly solicited, from the tenderness of his disposition, a return of friendship and esteem. Superior to prejudice he soon discovered in St. Amand a mind possessed of as much genuine nobleness, and as much refined sensibility as could be found in any of his species, and he contracted

for his future father an affection which resembled the filial.

"Alas!" exclaimed the young Marquis, bursting into the strong expression of long suppressed feeling, when the retirement of his own apartment allowed him liberty to indulge his thoughts, "it is too true, that I can never love Melanie with passion, and it is likewise true, that the high souled Lemira has made on my mind an impression too deep to permit me to hope that it soon will be effaced: but though my heart may be wounded with anguish, Melanie's shall never feel a pang occasioned by my unkindness or neglect."

On the eve of the day appointed for the nuptials, St. Amand mentioned to Valmire, that a cause which had excited universal interest, and in which he was employed, was on that morn-

ing to be tried, and asked if it would afford him any diversion to hear it. As his compliance with this offer would liberate Melanie from his observation, during several hours, which she intended to employ in preparations for her elopement, she pressed his acceptance of it with a fervor which induced his assent. Scarcely had St. Amand and his companion arrived at the room of justice, and taken their seats, when a female was led into the hall, habited in the deepest mourning, over whose head a black veil was thrown, which, entirely concealing her face, left nothing visible but a light, graceful form, and a profusion of dark brown hair, which, falling negligently over her back, extended nearly to the ground.

St. Amand, having with a respectful manner and gentle voice, desired her to withdraw her veil, as no dis-

guise was permitted on these occasions, she instantly complied and discovered features so beautiful, and a countenance so exalted by its sublime and intellectual expression, that Mellidor knew that they could belong to no other than to the Princess of Lorraine, notwithstanding the deep melancholy which appeared on the faded cheek, and in the neglected dress. Grief and astonishment stifled the exclamation, which was bursting from his lips; and his feelings became still more agitated, when St. Amand opened her case in the following words:

" As the daughter of the late Duke of Lorraine has undertaken to plead her own cause before this tribunal, my province is only to declare the just and noble reasons, which, inducing her to conquer the timidity natural to her sex, have occasioned her appear-

ance in the parliament of Dijon. The great Charles, whom it is no longer any crime to praise, having, after the seizure of the larger portion of his estates by the late King, contracted a large debt to carry on the expenses which the defence of the remainder of his possessions rendered necessary, was taken and thrown into prison, on his return to the castle, by his unfeeling creditors; whose rapacity, not being extinguished with his life, denies interment to the noble body. To procure a mitigation of that rigorous law, which gives to the creditor absolute power over his debtor even after death, the Princess, whose unremitting attentions in a damp and noxious prison, smoothed the pillow of disease, and whose gentle converse brightened the prospect of eternity, has determined to entrust her cause to no voice but her own; and, conscious of its jus-

tice, has resigned all her fears to appear before the administrators of the laws."

During the progress of this speech Mellidor's blood sometimes circulating quickly through his face, and sometimes entirely forsaking it, expressed the warm interest with which the lovely orphan had inspired him; while the hope of hearing her speak held him in silent and breathless expectation.

> Thrice *she* essay'd, and thrice in spite of scorn
> Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.

But at length, conquering, with an effort of her powerful mind this extreme sensibility, she addressed the court, in a clear and harmonious voice, to the following effect:

"With the conviction that mercy as well as justice dwells in the hearts of

my judges; and, with the consciousness that I must possess a more perfect knowledge of my father's history than a stranger possibly can, I have undertaken to plead the cause of mercy before this venerable tribunal. On this occasion I must not be called vain if I speak with that enthusiasm which every heart of sensibility must feel at the recollection of my father's virtues; who, in a long life, devoted to the service of his species, never suffered a day to pass undistinguished by some act of charity, of mercy, or of true glory; and who, when returning from the field of battle with wounds still bleeding, would refuse the assistance of the surgeon, lest the pains of the meanest soldier should be neglected. Even his faults, deriving their existence from the benignity, or from the superiority of his mind, were of a nature to conciliate the affections of the good, and the admiration of the

great; and thus, while the asylum which he afforded to a stranger and a fugitive, made him obnoxious to the wrath of the sovereign, the pride which would not stoop to supplicate for justice was the occasion of his ruin, of his death, and of my affliction! Were I pleading before the tribunal of my own country, I could say, this is the man, who, preserving your independence for so many years, guarded your city from invasion, your treasures from pillage, your families from assassination; who, while he possessed the means of subsistence, shared them with the hungry, the naked, and the miserable! It is to this man that, carrying your cruelty beyond that life with which all animosity should cease, you deny the rites of burial, rites which even the savage and the unbelieving Mahometan will not refuse to his Christian enemies."

Here her voice faltering the credi-

tors exclaimed, "We are not cruel, we only ask for justice."

"Justice," she replied, "will justice save a soul? Can you not learn a softer word until that awful day when you shall hear the great judge of the world exclaim, that he will show no mercy to those who have hardened their hearts against the cry of the orphan! and, if your breasts are not touched with compassion for me, oh! let the thoughts of your own future welfare teach you to be merciful."

She stopped, while Mellidor, from whose eyes tears softer than the dews of heaven distilled, gazed with the warmest admiration on her sublime countenance, and her gently bending figure. "If," she resumed, after a moment's pause, "the debt for which my father was arrested had been squandered in idle luxuries, or in vicious

pleasures, then indeed I should feel pain at being obliged to address you; but it was spent in protecting his kingdom, in securing the tranquillity of his subjects, in whose cause he exhausted his blood as well as fortune, and ruined his health in defending their rights! And the grateful return which you offer for so many and such splendid services, is to violate the sanctity of the dead, and to refuse to his noble remains the only mark of kindness which it is now in your power to bestow, a little earth to cover them!"

Her extreme agitation now compelled her to pause; while the look, with which her speech was accompanied, interested every heart except those of the unfeeling creditors, whose cries for justice had not been quieted by Lemira's pathetic eloquence.

With a glance of indignant gene-

rosity Mellidor started from his seat, and attracted the eyes of the spectators by his noble figure and animated countenance; but, perceiving that Lemira, who had not observed him, was going again to speak, he arrested the words, which he was on the point of uttering, to listen to the sweet sound of her voice. "Oh yes!" she said, while contempt of her enemies stifled her emotions, "you, cruel men, you shall be satisfied by the full completion of your barbarous justice! but I will assist you in finding out a method by which your ideas of justice may be fulfilled, and by which my wishes may likewise be accomplished. That body, on which you mean to wreak your cruelty, is now past the feeling of sorrow or of pain: but in me youth is yet fresh, and life and health are yet playful and vigorous in my frame; my joints may still be racked by torture; my flesh may still

be wasted by famine! On me, therefore, let your vengeance fall who am able and willing to bear it. Release my father's body, and make me in his place your prisoner."

Astonished at this generous proposition, which the creditors immediately accepted, St. Amand endeavoured, but without effect, to dissuade her from persisting in the execution of her project: but Mellidor, in whose mind surprise was quickly succeeded by admiration, exclaimed with fervor, "O! let me be the sufferer, and let the Princess be free!" This speech, attracting her attention, which had been before so much engrossed by the subject of her distresses that she had not perceived Mellidor, covered her cheeks with blushes as she recognised, in the impressive manner and noble countenance of the speaker, a language too well understood by her

heart; but, by drawing her veil over her face, she concealed its various changes from the observation of the curious spectators.

"No," she said, while the tremulous tone of her voice alone discovered the agitation of her mind, "you have already once saved my father's life, envy me not the happiness of suffering for him, nor suppose I can consent to share it with any person, however great may be his merit." So saying, she requested permission to retire to the prison where the body of Charles was detained, to which place Mellidor most willingly consented to be her conductor, being in the opinion of St. Amand (who was himself prevented by business from attending her) alone entitled by his rank and character to the high honor of accompanying the Princess of Lorraine. When, placed by her side in

the carriage which was to convey them to the prison, Mellidor lamented in the language of sincerity and with the accents of grief, that so much excellence was to be buried in a dungeon; she replied with a serene countenance and equal voice, "If you could be made sensible of the delight of my present feelings, and could know how little I have to regret in the world which I resign, you would rather rejoice at my happiness than grieve at my misery."

Scarcely had she pronounced these words when they arrived at the prison, the gates of which were no sooner unclosed than its inhabitants, who had learned the pious motive which had induced the Princess to reenter this gloomy mansion, flocked around her, and testified, by their words and tears, the astonishment and admiration with which her conduct had inspired them.

Through this crowd Mellidor opened a passage for her to the cell where her father's body was deposited; and, in compliance with her particular request, she was suffered to enter this room alone; and now, the tears which her exalted state of mind had hitherto restrained, burst forth at the sight of that apartment where she had been his constant companion, and where every object assisted to recall to her memory the tenderness of his affection and the immensity of her loss. "O blessed spirit!" she said while kneeling by the couch, her weeping eyes were cast upwards, "if thou art permitted to look down from those realms of glory upon those whom thou lovedst in the days of thy mortality, forgive these selfish tears which, falling over thy body, assure thee that I have broken thy last command, by indulging unavailing grief: O! forgive me that I do not rather rejoice that

thou art taken from a world of ingratitude and misery, to be placed in an abode where the sorrows of this life are only remembered, to render your happiness more sensibly felt, where no sin can sully your purity, and where you dwell with your great Creator for ever!"

Having thus spoken she covered her face with her hands, and continued to weep in silence until the arrival of St. Amand, who, entering the room with Mellidor, interrupted her sacred sorrow to commence the funeral which immediately took place.

Wrapped in her veil Lemira followed it: her grief was not ostentatiously displayed to attract the attention or commiseration of the spectators, but was silent and majestic; and no sooner was the awful ceremony finished than,

turning to the creditors, she said with an air of calm dignity;

"Now I am your property. Come! I will show you the way to the prison."

How great then was her surprise when they replied, "Your Highness is free: we have no further claims on your person, or your fortune."

With an exclamation of astonishment she turned to Mellidor, and her expressive eyes demanded the explanation which her tongue refused to ask: but he, confessing his total ignorance of the affair, added, "When I offered my person to purchase your liberty, I offered all that I possessed: but, while the inclination alone was mine, the power of assisting you has been vested in some more fortunate person."

At the conclusion of this speech his looks were directed to St. Amand, who, approaching with a respectful manner, confirmed the information of the creditors, and assured her that she was free. "Let not the sense of obligation distress you," he said, "for that is conferred on me: by venturing to pay the debt I have dared to solicit the friendship of a lady, whose nature and acquirements have rendered her so much my superior that to hope for it, in any other situation, would be presumption; and let me entreat you, to oblige me still further by accepting, for the present, the protection which my humble roof will be proud to afford to you."

Scarcely had he pronounced these words, than Lemira, who had hitherto derived almost supernatural support from the enthusiasm which animated her, being suddenly deprived of this

great actuating impulse, and, being at once overwhelmed with surprise, joy, and gratitude, felt her strength entirely forsake her, and she fell to the ground before Mellidor, or St. Amand, could fly to her assistance. Dispersing, however, the crowd which surrounded her, Mellidor took her delicate form in his arms; and, before the spectators had thought on a method of conveying her to any place where her senses might be recovered, he had quitted the chartreuse, and, passing through the gates of Dijon, had already placed his fair burthen in the carriage which was waiting to transport her to St. Amand's villa. This excellent man quickly joined them; and Mellidor, whose feelings were too strongly agitated to allow him to speak, continued to support in silence the pallid head of Lemira, until they arrived at the place of their destination, where she was placed on

a bed, in the magnificent apartment which St. Amand had commanded to be prepared for her reception. By the attentions of Melanie's women, the Princess soon began to recover her senses: but when the reviving colour indicated a return of life, her benefactor, who actually possessed that genuine sentiment which others do but feign, gently withdrew Mellidor from the room, adducing as a reason that her mind and body would require repose to renovate her spirits exhausted by deep sorrow, and her strength by continual fatigue; but in reality to spare her the shock of seeing a man, who, by reminding her of the extent of her obligations, would induce her to weary herself with expressions of gratitude which would be as distressing to his feelings as he supposed they would be humiliating to her pride.

CHAP. IX.

Ah! come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

Mellidor, whose heart was in a state of agitation when he left Lemira's room, of which until his acquaintance with her his placid mind had never been sensible, spoke little during dinner, and retired early in the evening on the pretence of fatigue, which, though not absolutely feigned, was certainly exaggerated to indulge his sudden taste for solitude.

Imagining that his wish of being alone proceeded from a desire of reflecting on the happiness which awaited him on the following morning, St. Amand retired to bed with the conviction that the remaining days of his life (and the weak state of his health prevented him from looking forward to a distant termination of his earthly career) would be passed in contemplating his darling child's felicity; and he did not lay his head on his pillow until he had returned thanks to the Father of mercies for the blessings which he had bestowed on one, who in his own estimation so little merited his invaluable favour.

In the meditations of Mellidor tranquillity had no share. When he had passed only an hour in Lemira's society, he felt a high admiration for her beauty, and a warm interest in her fate. But his heart was now more

strongly attached by the display of those virtues which he had before only imagined to exist in her; and his honor and his conscience, taking alarm as the latter convicted him of entertaining too tender a sentiment for Lemira while his hand was engaged to Melanie, all the faculties of his mind arose in a state of confusion and anarchy, depriving him for a time of the power to ascertain the principle of right which lay buried beneath this heap of contradictory feelings. But left alone in the still hour of night, when all the vanities of the world, all the flattering visions of hope, and all the deceitful dreams of love had vanished before the sober eye of reason, he saw the force of his engagements to Melanie, the sacredness of his promise to his father, his innocent sister dragged to the altar and compelled to take the veil: he saw the accumulated distresses attendant on a breach of his

word with the horror of a just and generous mind; and, asserting the natural vigor of his soul, he resolved, let the sacrifice of happiness be however painful, to fulfil his engagements to the young and beautiful heiress.

"No," said he, exalting his fine figure above its usual height, "I may be unfortunate, but I will never be guilty. Let conscience be my approver, and I will brave the power of fate!"

Melanie, who did not appear at dinner, passed the time of her father's and Mellidor's absence in preparations for her departure with Villeron; and, as night approached, her desire of seeing him, and her dread, lest some accident should prevent him from obeying her mandate, had increased to such an excess that she became incapable of forming any practicable scheme, by which she might elude, in case Villeron did not appear,

the fatal ceremony of the following day.

'Twas dead of night, when weary bodies close
Their eyes in balmy sleep and soft repose,
The winds no longer whisper through the woods,
Nor murmuring tides disturb the gentle floods,
The stars in silent order moved around,
And peace with downy wings was brooding o'er
the ground.

This beautiful description of the tranquillity of night presented a fine contrast to the situation of Melanie's mind; who, now pacing the room with hurried steps now unclosing the window of her apartment, listened in breathless expectation to the rustling of a leaf, or to the love-warbling voice of the nightingale, which sweetly interrupted the deep and general silence. But to Melanie's unpleased ear even the song of the nightingale was discord; and to a breast, which was the alternate residence of hope, love, anger, and fear, even the soft

balm of slumber was denied. Every minute her eyes were fixed on her watch; and, before the hour arrived which she had appointed as the period for her meeting with Villeron, she was in the garden anxiously awaiting his appearance. The hour, however, rolled away! the completion of another was rapidly approaching, but still the tardy lover was absent! She remained in the garden until, the first glimmerings of day assuring her that all hope must be resigned, she started, wildly exclaiming, " O heavens! he will not come! and to-morrow I shall be sacrificed to Valmire! Oh! wretch that I was to confide to the love of a man, when men are all alike volatile, inconstant, and ungrateful! No, I am no longer the object of his affections; and therefore hate shall take place of love!" So saying, she rushed with frantic haste into her apartment; and, throwing herself on the bed, she main-

tained a sullen silence during the rest of the night.

On her mother's side Melanie was nearly allied to insanity, and she had herself betrayed symptoms which gave her friends occasion to fear a temporary derangement of her intellect. The dread of irritating this tendency was the principal reason which induced her father to treat her faults with a gentleness, which was ill suited to correct her violent passions, or to awake into activity the dormant virtue of her mind. Apparently she resigned every object which her father did not think it right that she should pursue; but in reality she retained the wish, and she only waited for a proper opportunity to carry it into execution.

Convinced that Villeron no longer loved her, she felt no further anxiety about her fate; and, when her women

entered, she suffered them to dress her in the splendid attire which the fond father had provided for his Melanie's decoration. No sooner was her toilette completed than St. Amand led her to Mellidor, who, while he admired the blaze of charms which dazzled his eye, was happy that Lemira's indisposition and the recent death of her father prevented her from being present at the nuptial ceremony. His generous mind did ample justice to his bride; and he strove, by his attentions and his kindnesses, to conceal the melancholy regret which his reason attempted, but in vain, to banish from his heart; and, while he endeavoured to detach his thoughts from Lemira, in whose sublime soul he saw too great a similarity to his own, he wished to remember Melanie as the playmate of his childhood; as a wife who was deserving of his love, and who relied upon his superior strength

of mind for support, and on his tenderness for affection. These thoughts, however, prevented him from entering into conversation, and he accompanied her to church, with his eyes fixed on the floor of the carriage; and, as Melanie preserved the sullen silence which was the effect of unwilling submission to the necessity of her situation, St. Amand was the only person in company on whom the ensuing marriage promised to bestow happiness. The idea of uniting his daughter to one of the first noblemen in France, and of securing her future tranquillity by his amiable disposition and by his excellent principles, imparted to the benevolent heart of this father a joy that diffused itself over his countenance and manner.

Scarcely had the nuptial party reached Dijon when a courier, whose haste might have been discovered by

his foaming horse and dusty garments, arrived at St. Amand's villa, and demanded immediate audience of the Marquis de Valmire: but, being informed that the ceremony was then performing, he could not resist the temptation offered to him by the servants, and therefore stayed to partake their good cheer before he proceeded to Dijon. In a few minutes, however, he again set forward, and reached the church just as Mellidor was assisting Melanie, who had been extremely agitated during the ceremony, into the carriage. As she had been all the preceding day in expectation of a courier from Villeron, she trembled lest the letter which was delivered to her husband might have been designed for her; nor were her fears decreased when she perceived him tremble, and turn pale during the perusal of the epistle. Concluding that all was lost, she was on the point of

throwing herself at his feet to implore his mercy and compassion, when, having finished the letter, he relieved her alarm by exclaiming, while the tears gushed from his eyes, "O Melanie! my father is dying! At such a moment as this need I stay to apologize for quitting you so abruptly. You have a father too, and your own feelings will give you an adequate idea of mine."

Then embracing St. Amand, he sprung on a horse which one of the servants offered to him, and, desiring Bernard to follow him on another, he set off full speed for Beane; where, not finding the strength of his horse equal to his anxiety to proceed, he commanded a carriage to be prepared, and sent on a courier to order relays of horses. Throwing himself into the carriage, he ordered the postillion to drive with the utmost rapidity, and

then, abandoning his thoughts to the apprehensions which the sudden intelligence of the Viçomte's illness had inspired, he refused to lose any time in eating or sleeping lest he should arrive too late to be of any service to the beloved author of his being.

CHAP. X.

Is conscience then
No part of nature? Is she not supreme?
Thou regicide! Oh raise her from the dead!
Then, follow nature; and resemble God.
THE COMPLAINT.

When Mellidor quitted the carriage, Melanie, who could not sincerely lament his absence, joined in the praises which St. Amand lavished on his filial piety: but, wishing to conceal the true state of her feelings from her father, she ran, the moment the carriage stopped at the villa, into her chamber: and, throwing herself on a couch, burst into tears. In the solitude of her own apartment, where no eye could witness her weakness, she

found herself divested of that pride which had till now supported her; and, yielding up her mind to the softening influence of sorrow, she made no exertion to regain her self command, or to divert her thoughts from a subject on which her recent vows had forbidden them to rest. While her mind was thus in a state to receive any wrong impression, a knock at the door obliged her to return an answer; and Lindane, her favourite attendant, who was on the point of delivering a message, was struck dumb at Melanie's disordered appearance: but, soon recovering her power of speech, she exclaimed, "Good gracious, Mam'selle, you have been weeping! and on your wedding day too! What can possibly be the meaning of this grief?"

"Ah, Lindane!" said Melanie, turning aside her blushing face, "you

know too well it was not a wedding with the Marquis de Valmire that I wished for."

"Why no, to be sure," replied the attendant, affecting to sigh, "Poor Mr. Villeron! how miserable he will be when he hears that you are married."

"Very miserable undoubtedly," returned Melanie, with a look of indignation, "when he might so easily have prevented it."

"Poor gentleman," said Lindane again, "I dare say he is ill."

"Ill," repeated Melanie, with more anxiety than she should have betrayed, "What reason have you for supposing that he is ill?"

"It does not signify, for this will give you better information on the sub-

ject than I can," replied Lindane, drawing from her pocket a letter which she held out to the blushing Melanie. "Lindane," she said, frowning, "how dare you suppose that I should read a letter from Mon. Villeron when I was this morning married to another?"

"Oh dear, Mam'selle, I beg you to pardon me, I had indeed forgotten." But, perceiving that Melanie could not withdraw her eyes from the letter, she dropped it as if by accident, and then saying, "Well! I will tell your father that you will wait on the Princess to-morrow," she left the room.

For some time the unhappy Melanie gazed on the letter which lay upon the floor, without touching it. "I will not open it," she said to herself; "for, if I find that he still loves me, I shall not hate him; and my heart should now be Valmire's."

Unfortunately this resolution was not of long duration, for her ideas rapidly changing, she added, "But surely I may still retain a good opinion of him: Valmire could not object to that."

This being the argument which best accorded with her feelings, she yielded to it; and, taking up the letter, she perused in it an effusion of extravagant passion which to her biased mind appeared the perfection of eloquent composition. It concluded with an ardent request that she would indulge him with an interview on that night at the usual place of meeting; and with a prayer that the delay of the post might not have been fatal to his hopes. When she had finished its perusal, she exclaimed with the accents of agony:

" O Villeron! have I then sacrificed your happiness and my own to

a childish and an ill founded resentment? But, as it is now too late to recede, I will not see thee, for what canst thou say to unfasten the chain with which I am bound? What canst thou urge to convince me that I am not the wife of Valmire?"

Here her reflections were again interrupted by the entrance of Lindane, who brought a message from St. Amand to request his daughter's company at dinner, an invitation which, though at first she declined, she was at last prevailed upon to accept.

When she entered the room this good man embraced her, and, attributing the distress visible in her countenance to sorrow for her husband's absence, and seeing, as he supposed, her love and her sensibility in her tears, he blessed heaven for having

bestowed on Mellidor qualities which were so well calculated to engage her affections and command her esteem. If the tender father had suspected the impure source from whence her grief was derived, he would not, with fond exultation, have declared himself the happiest of parents, or have regarded with a sort of proud compassion those who were possessed of less amiable or less lovely daughters.

He entreated her to visit the Princess of Lorraine; who, though secluded by her recent loss from the society of the world, did not refuse to see the daughter of her benefactor, whose attentions might contribute to arrest the falling tears and to soothe the solitary grief of the mourner. Having promised compliance with her father's wishes on the following day, Melanie was permitted to retire

to her own apartment; while St. Amand, who concealed from her an indisposition with which he had been seized during the day, sought in the refreshment of sleep the restoration of ease and health.

CHAP. XI.

Pour'd in soft dalliance at a lady's feet
In fondest rapture he appear'd to lie;
While her fair neck with inclination sweet
Bent o'er his graceful form her melting eye,
Which his look'd up to meet in ecstasy.
Their words she heard not; words had ne'er express'd
What well her sickening fancy could supply;
All that their silent eloquence confess'd,
As breathed the sigh of fire from each impassion'd breast.

TIGHE'S PSYCHE.

THE moonbeams shed their lustre on the snowy robe of Melanie: the soft breath of the south wantoned in her chesnut tresses and kissed her cheek, now glowing like the crimson lotus on the banks of the Ganges, now pallid

as the light of the planet which shone refulgent above her head, when, emerging from the passage which formed the communication between her apartment and the garden, her unequal steps were unconsciously directed to the spot which Villeron had appointed for the place of assignation. Sometimes she stopped, and, scarcely raising her eyes from the ground, cast around a glance of terror; and sometimes, impelled by love, she proceeded onwards with a hurried foot: now conscience whispered her to return, and she retraced her steps; and now she again directed them in their first fatal course, while every moment her timid looks were thrown behind, and she started with fear at the quickened pulsation of her own heart, or at the sound of the wind gently playing in the lofty lime trees which waved their branches over her head. But her agitation was so much increased when

she reached the well known bower, that she stopped, and, placing her hand on her heart, she murmured, "Did any action, which was not wrong in itself, ever cause me so much alarm?"

The reply to this question, which her heart suggested, determined her to avoid seeing Villeron, and she was preparing to fly when the garden gate was unlocked, and she became fascinated to the spot by the dark eyes of her lover; who, throwing himself at her feet, exclaimed in the soft voice, but ardent manner of passion, "O my adored Melanie! since I have been separated from you every day has appeared an age, every second a year, and yet have I implored the hours to retard their flight, that I might arrive in time to receive my lovely bride. Tell, oh! tell me the fatal cause of these tears. I tremble, and yet wish to learn it."

"O Villeron! you are indeed too late."

"Too late," he repeated, starting up, while the moonbeams discovering to him Melanie's pale face, he added, "Are you then married?"

"Henri, I am," she replied with a convulsive sigh, "and we must part for ever!"

During the ensuing pause Villeron, who entirely concealed from Melanie the dark workings of his passions, and who seemed to be overwhelmed with grief for the event which she had just announced to him, was arranging in his libertine breast a project, suggested by her apparent want of firmness and his own still ardent love; and, having determined on his mode of proceeding, he said in a voice so low and mournful as scarcely to be

heard, while he pressed her hand in his, " And have you then cruelly abandoned a man who for these last three years has lived only to love you, and has only existed because you smiled, for one who, by immediately forsaking you, has discovered that he was incapable of appreciating your charms, and that his heart is too cold to feel a passion ardent and eternal like mine? O Melanie! could you then, careless of the miseries of my breaking heart, abandon me to the horrors of a maddened brain, and to the agonies of death inflicted by my own sword?"

He paused to suffer the impression of his last words to sink deeply into her heart; and that they were chosen with a thorough knowledge of her character was evident from their immediate effect on her feelings; for her consciousness of occasioning sorrow to the being whom she adored, her

pity for that sorrow, her pride wounded by Mellidor's coldness, were all placed immediately before her eyes by the artful lover's speech, to which she replied; "And can you think me so cruel as to be insensible of the suffering which I have inflicted? Can you suppose that inconstancy to you has induced me to take this fatal step? Ah, no—" she stopped, for tears choked her utterance; but Villeron had heard enough to convince him that her love was sufficiently strong to break the links which attached her to Mellidor; and he, therefore, passionately exclaimed, "Say not then that we must part, my fairest, dearest creature! nor precipitate me, by the power of that dreadful word, into the arms of a self-given death; and, if your high sense of propriety forbids you to retain me as a lover, still may the title of friend be mine, and still, with a sentiment which you need not blush to inspire, I may be permitted to enjoy your de-

lightful converse, and to watch with the anxiety of a brother over the happiness of my amiable and lovely Melanie."

"And do you then," she replied in a tender voice, "think that I may, without fear of censure, indulge a sentiment such as you describe? and can I trust him as a friend whom I have so long considered as a lover?"

"During the three years that I have been passionately attached to you," replied he, "have I ever endeavoured to mislead your inexperienced youth, or to dispossess your mind of those principles which the prejudice of your education has taught you to respect? Answer me, Melanie!"

"Never," she replied; "but——

"Since when then," he added, without allowing her time to state her ob-

jections; "since when have I appeared so base in your eyes? and what fault of mine has induced you so suddenly to represent me to yourself in such black and odious colours?"

"O! pardon me for entertaining for a moment a suspicion injurious to your honor; and, believe me, my heart bleeds for the wounds which I inflict. Secure of your honor I resign myself into your hands: oh! assist me to call forth the latent energy of my mind: regard my weaknesses with compassion; and fortify my heart against yourself."

These words, pronounced by Melanie and accompanied by a flood of tears, were but too well calculated to encourage Villeron's artful views, and to lead him to anticipate with delight their full and speedy accomplishment: but, assisted by the night, he succeeded in concealing his ardent feelings;

and, respectfully pressing her hand to his lips, he said, " O Melanie! when I forget this generous and confiding appeal may I be punished with your hatred, and with all the tortures of a slow and painful death!"

He then implored her to favor him with an interview on the following night; which, after a few reluctant scruples, she promised to grant. " Then," said he, " at midnight and in this place:" but, as the light of the moon discovered to him a figure in black gliding through the trees at some distance, he added hastily, " No, not here, for here we may be interrupted, but in your own apartment: I will enter through the secret passage." Then, without giving her time to reply, he disappeared through the door by which he had entered.

" What have I done?" exclaimed

the affrighted girl at the moment when the door, closing on Villeron, allowed her an opportunity for reflection; "What have I done? Unknown to my father I have promised a second interview to Villeron. Ah! would that I could recall my words! but he is gone too far to hear my voice; and, as he is now only my friend, surely I may think of him and see him without guilt." This idea was the most dangerous that could possibly have occurred to her mind; and it was for this reason that Villeron, who had devoted his talents for the last three years to the study of her character, had sought to instill it into her breast; that, her eyes being closed on the guilt, her thoughts might, without apprehension of danger, be continually directed to him, and that thus he might become so essentially blended with her existence, that it would be impossible for her ever to effect a separation.

A gentle sigh, which seemed to proceed from a heart rather softened than oppressed by sorrow, now recalled the sad reflector from her meditations; and when she looked up she perceived that the Princess de Lorraine, of whom she had previously caught a glimpse, stood before her.

The moonbeam fell on the face of the fair orphan, and discovered to Melanie a countenance so illumined by intellect, so exalted by piety, and a form so aerial, that the angelic figure was only recognised to be a member of this lower sphere by the black robe in which she was wrapped, and by the tear which occasionally stole adown her cheek.

Melanie rose in confusion: but Lemira, taking her hand, reseated her on the mossy couch; and then, placing herself by her side, she said in a voice

whose silver tones stole gradually on her ear,

"The shadowy twilight which the moon occasions, the gentle gale from the south, the song of the nightingale so much in unison with the heart of the mourner, and, above all those innumerable worlds which glow refulgent in their own fires, have all contributed to lead me to this spot; where, seeking solitude, I have found a friend whose love of retirement appears to sympathize with mine; though all her thoughts must be devoted to the recollection of some past pleasure, or to the anticipation of some expected happiness."

"Perhaps," said Melanie with a sigh, "the subject of my meditations may be as painful as that of yours."

"Oh! no!" Lemira replied, "for you

have a father." The flexibility of her voice, as she pronounced these words, denoted such an exquisite sensibility at the loss of hers, and expressed so well the value which she attached to a parent, that Melanie blushed to think how little was the share to which hers was admitted in her meditations. While, therefore, she pressed Lemira's hand in silence, the latter resumed: "And such a father! His goodness to an unfriended and unprotected orphan, who had no claims on his beneficence but those which her state of destitution offered to his benevolent mind, assures me that his kindness to her, who possesses every right to his affection, must be unbounded."

"And were you then a stranger to sorrow while your father lived?" inquired Melanie timidly.

"Oh! yes!" replied with emphasis

the high souled girl, " in his society the hours flew away winged with that happiness which is the inevitable result of a perfect interchange of ideas, of an inseparable union of affections; and while he talked of morality, patriotism, fortitude, and piety, I caught the bright beams as they emanated from his soul; and my breast became warm with the enthusiasm which kindled in his. Even," she continued, while her voice became sensibly agitated, " even when, deprived of his estates by the late King and unrewarded by the ingratitude of the Emperor, he was dragged to the close confinement of a prison; even when the noxious vapours, arising from the want of free air, had diseased a frame already injured by the hardships of a camp; even when deprived of every consolation except what he extracted from his own internal resources;

even then the voice of kindness was not silent towards the sharer of his sorrows; even then the precepts of fortitude, of piety, of forgiveness of injuries, were most strongly enforced by one, who, by never uttering a complaint, never breathing a murmur, never pronouncing an invective, gave me an example of silent suffering virtue which taught me what I ought to be, and yet convinced me how far I was from perfection. O Heaven!" added the young enthusiast, " forgive me if one spark of resentment should still remain unextinguished in my breast! forgive me if, retaining a lively sense of my father's merits, I should also retain a recollection of his injuries!"

She ceased: but Melanie, amazed at the greatness of mind which had animated her speech, and which had

exalted her countenance to sublimity, was unable to reply, and stood trembling, astonished, and confounded.

Having at last recovered herself sufficiently to speak, she exclaimed in broken sentences, "Ah! why did not Heaven sooner deign to give me a friend, whose superiority of mind would have afforded me assistance and support in all my difficulties and doubts?"

This conversation, the continuation of which might have been productive of beneficial consequences to the half repenting Melanie, was interrupted by Lindane; who warned the fair friends of a falling shower to which the interest of their discourse had rendered them insensible. They, therefore, parted for the night with mutual regret; and Lindane, accompanying Lemira into her room, said, that she came by the commands of the Marquise to offer her services to the Princess.

" I thought that the young lady, with whom I have been conversing, was Mon. St. Amand's daughter," said Lemira.

" And so she is, Madame," replied Lindane; " but she is just married to the young Marquis de Valmire."

" I thank your lady," said Lemira, turning her head quickly away to prevent Lindane from observing the sudden paleness which had overspread her face; " but I require no assistance, and you may retire." No sooner had she quitted the room than Lemira, falling into a seat which stood near her, continued for a few minutes to gaze in mute and motionless anguish on the ground; until, her eyes gradually filling with tears, she was awakened from her deep and alarming reverie by the falling of the drops on her hands: then, starting up, she exclaimed, while her cheeks were suf-

fused with a crimson blush, "O Lemira! and is thy mind then debased with thy fortunes? Shall tears of selfish regret be shed by those eyes which are accustomed only to weep in the cause of virtue, for the miseries of my country, or for the calamities of my species? No! I will not grieve the spirit of my father by the display of such weakness."

So saying she proudly wiped away the tears from her face; and, having passed some time in prayer, which she addressed to her Creator with even more than her accustomed fervor, she retired to bed; where the purity of her conscience soon invited the approach of sleep, which folded her in its embrace until a late hour of the following day.

CHAP. XII.

Oh! mortals, short of sight, who think the past
O'erblown misfortune still shall prove the last:
Alas! misfortunes travel in a train;
And oft in life form one perpetual chain.
Fear buries fear, and ills on ills attend,
Till life and sorrow meet one common end.

YOUNG.

WHEN Mellidor alighted at his father's door, his anxiety and alarm were betrayed by the varying colour on his cheek, and the short and rapid inquiry which he addressed to the servant who appeared at the door. "The Vicomte still lives!" was the reply which, accompanied with a mournful shake of the head, induced Mellidor to rush precipitately into the room where the Vicomte usually slept.

Although prepared for a great alteration in his father's appearance, yet the hollow and faded eye, the emaciated face, the languid countenance, at once bursting on his sight, overpowered his fortitude; and, groaning, he sunk upon his knees by the side of the bed, while the Vicomte said, "O my son! my dearest Mellidor! I knew that you would never suffer my eyes to be closed by mercenary strangers: I knew that you would never forsake me in the last moments of my existence."

"My father!" exclaimed Mellidor, tears falling as he spake over the Vicomte's hand which enclosed his, "say not that they are the last: still, still may you live to bless your son!"

"No, my boy, the visions of this world are fading from my eyes: but I see the glories of another glimmering through this mass of mortality which

obstructs my more perfect view: a world where every idea of happiness will be realized, and where we shall at last find that perfection which here we have only imagined."

His soul, which could never bend to the pride of man, submitted with cheerfulness to the decrees of his Maker; and, being softened by the weakness which required aid, he gave vent without controll to the natural feelings of his heart. Gently repressing the violence of Mellidor's grief, he next proceeded to inquire into his temporal affairs; and, having learnt that he was married, he said, "When you have performed the last sad duties to my earthly remains, return, my dear Mellidor, instantly to Dijon; where that peace, which is the reward of internal excellence, will at least be yours."

"And will not my father," said Mel-

lidor, raising his head, " deign to instruct me by his advice, which, given in a moment like this, must make an impression on my mind never to be effaced?"

" Advice, my son, is scarcely necessary to one whose goodness places him above those temptations to which less perfect natures are incident; and it is only the romantic excess of every virtue which is to be dreaded in you."

" And does my father then think that any virtue can be too sublime in its nature, or too high in its degree?"

"Valor, when carried beyond the line of prudence, becomes rashness; sensibility degenerates into imbecillity; religion bursts into the wild delirium of enthusiasm, or darkens into the gloom of superstition; glory dazzles the eye, and, carrying us beyond the boundary of honor, plunges us into

the abyss of folly and of guilt. From these errors, Mellidor! I would guard your youthful mind," added the Vicomte, his voice growing weaker; "for I fear my endeavours to strengthen the natural sensibility of your character, and to alter the romantic bias of your ideas, have not been attended with entire success."

The entrance of the physician put an end to this discourse. His answer to the Vicomte's inquiry, of how long he thought it probable he might survive, increased Mellidor's grief; for it assured him that his father could possibly survive only until the next day. The Vicomte received this intelligence with calm, but feeling intrepidity; and, dismissing the physician, he pressed Mellidor's hand and said, "Before I resign my being into His hands who bestowed it on me, let me give you my last directions, which will, I know, be executed by you with

that promptitude and punctuality with which you have ever attended to my commands.

Caliste is confined during my pleasure in the Chateau Meillant, whither she was conveyed by the power of a lettre de cachet procured by my interest; and it is now my wish that she should be released; but that no addition should be made to the small fortune which I have bequeathed to her, and which places her above indigence, though it will not supply her with the means of extravagant enjoyment. I have been obliged to leave Rosalie dependent on your bounty: but to whom could I better consign her than to one who, with the title of guardian, will unite that of brother and of friend, and who will waft from her inexperienced innocence the contaminated breath of the world?"

Mellidor mingled tears with his assurances of a perfect acquiescence in his father's wishes; and, the Vicomte now falling asleep, Mellidor watched his slumbers with the earnest solicitude of a son who feels that his love renders his duty pleasing, and that the performance of his duty increases his love.

After two hours of unrefreshing sleep the Vicomte unclosed his eyes, and in their languid gaze, and the feeble voice in which he articulated his blessing, Mellidor perceived the close of his life swiftly approaching. The agonizing anxiety of this moment stopped the flow of his tears; but in a few minutes they dropped anew on the inanimate body of his father.

When there exists a necessity to force the exertion of the faculties,

grief, though not extinguished, is not weakly indulged; and Mellidor, who now found himself the great actuating spring which was to govern the motion of the late Vicomte's family, and to issue the directions respecting the last sad duties that were to be performed, was compelled to rouse himself from that state of torpid inaction into which he had sunk when the breath forsook his father's body, and to give commands because others could only obey. These pious offices being finished, he thought that some time might allowably be devoted to the indulgence of uninterrupted affliction for the loss of a parent to whose heart, at least in the last hours of his existence, he felt himself closely pressed; and he was now sensible, that, at the awful prospect of death, the mind throws off concealment, and appears arrayed in its natural beauty or de-

formity. In the present hour then of silent recollection, the youthful mourner forgot the former austerity of his father's manners; and, while dwelling with sweet but melancholy pleasure on his last expressions of tenderness, he derived an inexhaustible source of consolation from the consciousness of his never having occasioned one sigh for him to be breathed by a parent's grief, or one blush for him to be kindled on a parent's cheek.

Many days had elapsed before Mellidor could think of executing his father's last injunctions. He then obtained an order for the release of the Vicomtesse; and, meaning to retain the house and servants of the late Vicomte until he could ascertain Melanie's wishes respecting his future establishment, and, having left with the

Maître d'Hotel a letter for the Abbé de Fleurville, who was then at his abbey, entreating him to follow him to Dijon, he tore himself with regret from the place where he had spent his boyish days, and where he thought, with his present prospects, that he had enjoyed the happiest years of his existence. After a rapid journey he arrived at Chateau Meillant, where he found the Vicomtesse, whose spirit of intrigue, pride, and extravagance, were subdued by a long and solitary confinement; by the want of that adulation from which her vanity derived its nourishment, and of that theatre on which her follies had been played off with success. Deprived of the assistance of art, and habited in a dress of gray camlet, reaching from her throat to her feet, pale from confinement, and worn by vexation, Mellidor no longer beheld in her that Caliste who had sacrificed every duty at

the shrine of fashion; but a despairing penitent, who had expiated her faults by a severe penance, and who was become the object of compassion and the victim of remorse. When she heard of her husband's death she was greatly shocked: but, finding that Mellidor was to be her liberator, she burst into tears; and, falling at his feet, declared her unfeigned repentance of the errors which she had committed, and implored his pardon for those wrongs of which she had more particularly been guilty towards himself. Mellidor hastened to raise her from her degrading attitude; and, assuring her of his entire forgiveness, told her that he had provided a carriage to convey her into Languedoc, where she might remain with her daughter until his return from Burgundy; that her daughter was ignorant of her humiliating punishment; and that, if her repentance were sincere, as he believed

that it was, she should ever find in him an affectionate son and a true friend. Having charged her with a letter to Rosalie informing her of her father's death, he took leave of her, and proceeded with a sorrowful heart across the country towards Dijon.

CHAP. XIII.

Not poppy, nor mandragora
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to such sweet sleep
Which thou owest yesterday.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE great clock in the city of Dijon had struck one as Mellidor rode rapidly through its streets, which were still kept awake by the votaries of dissipation, though the eyes of the mechanic, whose toil had supplied the luxury of his bed, were closed in soft repose. As he approached the abode of St. Amand his heart beat quick: but he started when he traced its commotion to the idea that Lemira also occupied a place in the villa; and,

endeavouring to force her image to resign the situation which it obstinately held in his mind, he strove to dispossess it with the recollection of Melanie's charms and of Melanie's tenderness.

Unwilling to disturb St. Amand's family at that late hour, he employed a key which had been given to him on the day of his marriage to procure him silent access to his apartment. Having, therefore, unlocked the gate, he was on the point of entering the garden when he found himself suddenly attacked by a man who plunged his weapon into his defenceless breast. He did not fall: but, drawing his sword, he placed himself in a posture of defence, and demanded, in a firm and elevated voice, the reason of this unjust and ignoble conduct. Finding, however, that no answer was returned, and that his antagonist was

preparing to renew his attack, Mellidor was compelled to defend himself from the stroke of the bloody assassin; and a combat ensued, which was rendered doubly terrible by Melanie; who, being alarmed by the clashing of swords, threw herself with dreadful shrieks between the combatants and implored them to desist. Mellidor replied, "I am ignorant of my adversary and the cause of his enmity: but witness, Heaven! how unwillingly I have drawn my sword even in the defence of my life."

But Villeron, seeking only to obtain victory by the death of his rival, persisted in the contest; while Mellidor, whose superior height and skill in fencing, had till now given him the advantage, breathless and almost fainting from loss of blood, seemed to be the destined victim of his enemy's barbarity: but the latter, advancing

with a tremendous thrust for the purpose of ensuring success, received the point of Mellidor's sword in his right side, and fell at the moment when, attracted to the spot by Melanie's screams, St. Amand appeared at the gate. Regardless of her father's presence, she threw herself by Villeron's body, lavishing on his senseless form the fondest caresses of agonized love. The dreadful conviction, which flashed upon his mind, that his daughter's guilt was the occasion of the horrid scene now presented to his confused sight, and of the streams of blood that inundated the ground; the idea, that the fondly nurtured happiness of his life was for ever blasted, overpowered instantly, with shame and grief, his frame already enfeebled by illness; and, bursting asunder the slender cord which attached him to this world, transported him at once into a region where sin and sorrow cannot

enter. Melanie, who heard him fall, springing from the ground where she had been lying by the side of Villeron's body in a state of distraction, ran to him, and, seeing that he was indeed no more, she uttered a groan which seemed to be the last pang of convulsed nature, and fell insensible on the earth.

Lemira now entered to view this scene in all its extent and plenitude of horror.

St. Amand, Melanie, and Villeron, all apparently dead were extended on the grass, which, being stained with blood, exhibited a most dreadful appearance; and Mellidor, regardless of his wound and still erect, though deprived of the power of moving, stood like a superior genius leaning on his bloody sword, and contemplating with the calmness of despair the horrors with

which he was surrounded. Terror, prevailing over the fortitude of her mind, prevented it during a short time from acting for the benefit of the unfortunate: but, soon rising superior to the agony which oppressed her, it resumed its natural functions; and then, without waiting to be informed of the sad cause of this dreadful scene, her correct judgment presented to her the measures proper to be pursued to remedy these disasters, if indeed to remedy them were possible. She ran towards the house, and, having met Bernard who had been alarmed by the noise, she implored him to go immediately and attend his Lord who was severely wounded by an unknown ruffian. She then despatched a messenger to procure two surgeons, and desired him to allege, as a reason to compel their instant attendance, that Mon. St. Amand was taken suddenly ill. With faltering steps she next returned to the garden,

and, again meeting Bernard at the gate, directed him to convey the bodies of Villeron and St. Amand into separate apartments. She approached Mellidor and entreated him to enter the house and retire to his own chamber, where surgical assistance awaited him: but, starting from her hand which she had placed on his arm, he exclaimed, while a violent shivering seized him, "Lemira! defile not your innocence with a murderer's touch: give your attentions to those who are more worthy of your care; and leave a wretch, whose life is already forfeit to the laws, to that death which his crime so well deserves!"

Lemira, who was deeply affected by the fixed anguish and despair which she saw impressed on his lofty countenance, answered, "You are then determined to die by your own neglect."

"To die!" he cried, with deep and violent emotion, "No, I dare not die! With hands stained by the blood of a fellow creature I dare not rush uncalled into the presence of the Almighty, nor exhibit to the shuddering angels a proof of human temerity sufficient to make them weep! I must live till a disgraceful death on a scaffold shall in some measure expiate my involuntary crime: therefore lead me, sweet consoler!" he added in a more composed manner, "lead me where you will."

The trembling girl was supporting him to the door, when, as they passed Melanie who still lay on the ground, he started and entreated Lemira to return to her assistance.

Scarcely had he reached his room when the surgeon entered it; and Lemira, from whom Mellidor had de-

sired an account of Villeron, whose supposed death hung more heavily on his mind than his own dangerous situation, resigned him to the care of the medical man, and returned to Melanie. Her, with the assistance of Flora, the Princess's English attendant, she conveyed into her own apartment; where she was obliged to leave her to the management of Flora with directions to administer to the inanimate girl those remedies which might the most successfully conduce to her recovery. She then repaired to the room to which Villeron had been removed; and, having learnt from the surgeon who had examined the wound that it was not mortal, she retired, requesting the surgeon to accompany her to St. Amand, whose altered appearance, however, convinced her that medical aid would be administered to him in vain, before the surgeon exclaimed, with a look of benevolent compas-

sion, " The great artery of the heart is burst, and this life is for ever closed on this excellent man."

The tears, which surprise and horror had hitherto checked, now flowed abundantly from Lemira's eyes: but, recollecting the state of suspense in which Mellidor remained, she desired Abbeville, which was the name of the surgeon, to accompany Bernard to the Vicomte; who would not suffer his wound to be inspected by the ignorant and assuming being to whose care he had been consigned. With this request Mon. Abbeville the more readily complied as Villeron had expressed a desire to be attended by the other surgeon with whom he was acquainted.

" Assure the Vicomte," said the weeping Lemira, as Abbeville was retiring, " of the safety of that miserable man whom we have just left: that in-

formation will contribute much to his recovery." When he was gone, the unhappy orphan turning towards the bed, while her clasped hands were raised to heaven, exclaimed, "O my benefactor! my second father! Thou didst but appear to snatch me from the horrors of a prison, to administer consolation to my afflictions, to place me in a state of affluent comfort: thou didst but show me a little ray of hope glimmering through clouds of sorrow, when by thy death it is for ever totally extinguished, and the prospect is again overspread with the darkness of despair! But, O righteous Heaven! I arraign not thy just decrees, nor prefer my own happiness to that of the excellent being over whose cold form my tears now descend. Had he lived, I should not, indeed, have been left in a state of perfect destitution; for I should have been possessed of one friend, whose sorrows would have mingled

with mine: but he would have been condemned to drag the burden of wounded feelings through an existence where no object could have appeared to cheer his gloomy journey; and to have had the rewards which he is now receiving postponed to the uncertain period of many years!"

In the ensuing pause of a few minutes the young enthusiast seemed to have forgotten the horrors with which she was surrounded, and even the duties which still claimed her attention: but, soon recovering from her momentary trance, she exclaimed, "By the still small voice of conscience he speaks to me from the grave, and tells me that his unhappy daughter still lives to derive improvement from my advice, and benefit from my care."

Then, endeavouring to banish from her mind the suspicion of Melanie's

guilt, and to awaken every feeling of compassion towards this unhappy girl, Lemira proceeded to her room and found her just recovering from the state of insensibility into which the recent scene of horror, and more particularly her father's death had plunged her. But the first glance she cast on Melanie's eyes, which were fixed in stony stedfastness on vacancy, assured her that, though the senses of the wretched girl were restored, her reason remained absent. Almost overwhelmed with this new calamity, Lemira sent Flora to request Abbeville's attendance as soon as he quitted Mellidor; and before her return, while Lemira was hesitating how to address Melanie, with a piercing shriek the unfortunate woman exclaimed, "O Villeron, drag me not down that dreadful precipice into the abyss which burns with fire, where demons with flaming hair wait to receive us! Do not exact from

me this dreadful proof of love! Save me, O save me, my father! But see how pale he looks! He falls! and a dreadful frown still hangs upon his brow! In pity, O my father! say only that you forgive your wretched, your guilty child! He will not answer! his hand is cold! his eyes are fixed! Death has enclosed him in his icy mantle, and I no more shall hear that voice, which was only heard to pronounce blessings. O God! hide from me this cruel, this agonizing sight!" Then, clinging to the Princess, she concealed her burning head on the bosom of her friend; and she, seizing this moment of silence, endeavoured, with the balm of pity and consolation, to heal the wounded mind of the wretched sufferer. But, not attending to the comfort which was offered to her, she continued, without raising her head, and looking up timidly into Lemira's face, to say, "But I was not the cause of

his death: he was ill before: was he not?"

"He was," answered Lemira soothingly, "and in any event his death could only have been protracted to the period of a few days, for the complaint of which he died must have proved fatal to him."

"Heaven-instructed consoling angel!" exclaimed Melanie, "what comfort do your words impart to my guilty mind!"

The comparatively calm manner with which these words were pronounced induced Lemira to entertain hopes that Melanie's reason was returning: but, bursting from her with a sudden start, the girl cried, fixing her eyes on a vacant spot at the foot of the bed, "There stands Valmire! his sword still red with Villeron's

blood, prepared to pierce my breast! On his awful brow anger and revenge sit enthroned, while from his tremendous eyes the brightness of indignant virtue streams in resplendent flames of light! O Valmire! banish me to the furthest part of the globe! bury me for ever in a cloister! but do not kill me; for indeed I am unfit to die!"

At this moment Abbeville entering the room, Lemira in speechless agony pointed to Melanie whose deplorable situation so entirely engrossed her attention as to suspend, during a few minutes, her anxiety on Mellidor's account. When Abbeville had felt her pulse, by declaring her to be in a high fever, he removed Lemira's fears as to the continuance of the derangement: but he increased her alarm with regard to the danger attendant on her illness; whilst the impossibility of procuring the

unhappy creature one instant's repose aggravated her complaint, and left little hopes of her recovery.

Abbeville, now turning to Lemira who stood the pale and motionless image of despair, implored her to quit this scene of woe, and endeavour to take some repose, as, being well acquainted with Melanie's disposition and constitution, he could better than any other adapt his consolations, and his prescriptions to her mental and her bodily diseases. Exhausted by the calamities of the night, Lemira consented to retire for a time; but, taking the opportunity of his accompanying her to the door, she made inquiries concerning Mellidor, to which the surgeon replied, "I found him in that state of violent agitation, which, in a sensitive and an upright mind, generally follows the commission of a wrong act; from which though my

assurances of his antagonist's safety in some measure relieved him, and though the weapon has happily entered without touching any vital part; yet, from the great loss of blood, much danger is to be apprehended, or at least a long confinement will be the inevitable result."

Deeply affected by this account Lemira sought her own chamber. Without the expectation of there finding repose, she only wished in that retirement to collect her wandering ideas, and to seek, by prayer and meditation, to renew those powers of the mind, which might enable her to act, at the present fearful crisis, with energy and effect. Having prayed not in vain to the heavenly Providence to direct her measures, so that they might best contribute to the welfare of the unhappy persons, in whose fate her humanity was so deeply interested; and

for fortitude to sustain her, during the exertion of her painful duties, she rose from her knees with a mind strengthened and refreshed, but with a body weak and languid from the want of rest. Throwing herself on a couch she began seriously to contemplate the events of the few last hours, and to seek for their causes either in her recollection, or her imagination.

She perfectly remembered having seen a man in the garden with Melanie: but, the darkness in which they were enveloped leaving his age and form uncertain, her innocent and unsuspicious mind had then decided without inquiry that it was St. Amand, with whom she thought Melanie might delight to stray and converse on the power or goodness of the Creator, speaking in the wonders of the universe: and the views presented by her imagination led her into the wide

ocean of conjecture, where she had only the dangerous pilot of appearance to guide her anxious and woe-driven thoughts.

" Melanie," she said, " is perhaps the guilty cause of these calamitous events; for what but injured honor could tempt Mellidor to attack the life of a fellow being, to break the laws, and, in any event, to expose himself to certain death? Or was his sword drawn alone in self defence when assaulted by the lover of Melanie? Ah cruel and fatal spirit of false honor! when wilt thou cease to keep the minds and actions of the noble and the generous in subjection to thy sway? Ah, misjudging men! will not the severity of the laws; will not the dread of the just anger of Heaven; will not the benevolent precepts of religion prevail on you to keep your passions within due bounds; and not to re-

venge your injuries with the sword of the duellist?"

These reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Abbeville, who told her that he waited on her for the purpose of learning what course of conduct she wished him to pursue, since Melanie, in consequence of his bleeding her, was now become somewhat more composed.

" If it be possible," she said, " to preserve the reputation of the unfortunate Melanie from the whisper of the slanderer, and to rescue the lives of these unhappy men from the rigor of the laws, it is only by a successful concealment of the events of this night that the deed can be effected. From you, who have been so many years the friend as well as the physician of this family, I need not exact a promise of secrecy; but your associate, who will

not perhaps be actuated by the same benevolent motives which govern your conduct, should be cautioned on the subject. Go, therefore, and seek him before he quits this house: explain to him all the reasons which render secrecy necessary: make him sensible of the miseries which would be the consequence of a divulgement of these calamities; and, if he has any humanity, he will be silent."

Abbeville, promising to give to her estimable projects all the support of which he was capable, left the room in high, but silent admiration of the character that could combine pity for the guilty with the superiority of virtue.

In a few minutes he returned, and, with a countenance of astonishment, informed the Princess that Mon. Villeron had caused himself to be re-

moved to his own house, whither he had been accompanied by his medical attendant. Abbeville, however, added that he would follow him thither, and that he would return to acquaint the Princess with the result of their meeting.

Rising languidly from her seat, the Princess now went to Melanie, whom she found in a state of unceasing restlessness, under the persuasion that Mellidor, who was alone, as she imagined, in possession of her secret, would reveal it, and thus expose her to the scorn and hatred of the world. Her eyes, unwashed by the kindly shower of repentance, were never at rest, and were apparently seeking some object which they yet feared to encounter. Lindane, who wished to see her lady, now opened the door; but no sooner did Melanie perceive her than, uttering the most dreadful shrieks, and

hiding herself behind Lemira, she entreated her to take away that monster who had been the author of all her misfortunes. Finding that it was in vain that Lindane approached, and in a soothing voice endeavoured to pacify her mistress, Lemira begged the attendant to withdraw; and, having said that her lady was ill, she did not think it necessary to give any further explanation. Flora then, who was an English girl, and did not understand French, was selected by the Princess to attend on the still delirious Melanie.

CHAP. XIV.

Is this a dagger, which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me
clutch thee:—
I have thee not; and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind; a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

MACBETH.

DAY was far advanced before Abbeville relieved Lemira's painful watch; and, when he arrived, his countenance of deepened sadness and the following account of his mission only rendered her apprehensions greater and her sorrows more acute.

" I have made every exertion, but

without effect, to see the person to whom you sent me: for his close attendance on Mon. Villeron makes all access impossible; and I am sorry to be obliged to add, that an unfavorable change in the latter is the occasion of this redoubled attention on the part of his surgeon."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Lemira in the same low voice in which the other had spoken, "and should he die!" The idea of the poignancy of Mellidor's sufferings, if such an event should occur, superseded all other feelings in her mind; and she persuaded Abbeville to conceal from him the intelligence, which they had just received, until his recovery should be more certain.

Abbeville found Melanie's fever somewhat lowered; and, being deceived by the tranquillity which had succeeded to the violent delirium,

he administered a composing draught to her; and then proceeded to visit Mellidor, whom he found just awakened from a short slumber. The first question which he asked respected Villeron; to which Abbeville returning such an answer as had been dictated by Lemira, Mellidor exclaimed in the fervent language of gratitude, "I thank thee, O merciful God! for had he died by my hand, however innocent might have been my intention, however guilty might have been his actions, the rest of my shortened life would have been sacrificed to the most agonizing remorse. O my father," he added, while the hectic blush, passing from his cheek, made the succeeding paleness appear more dreadful, "how happy art thou to have closed thine eyes, ere they could behold the misfortunes of thy son!"

After a few moments' silence, and, uttering a deep sigh, Mellidor inquired

in a faltering voice for St. Amand and his unhappy daughter. Abbeville, unwilling to shock his feelings by an avowal of the truth, replied only by a slight motion of his head, and then proceeded to the examination of the wound. " Are they yet alive?" asked the sensitive and anxious Mellidor.

" Would that the daughter," he answered, " were as happy as the father! for that good man is transplanted into a clime, where his virtues may flourish without fearing the blight of sin or the storm of adversity: but the wretched girl, whose folly has, I fear, occasioned all these calamities, has lost, in the wildness of phrensy, the benefits to be derived from repentance, though she retains with unfortunate tenaciousness the sense of guilt."

At this account Mellidor was so deeply affected as to be for some mo-

ments unable to speak; and, when he recovered his voice, and wished to ask of Abbeville an explanation of Melanie's conduct, which his intimate acquaintance with the family would probably enable him to give, he found himself so weakened by illness, and his ideas so involved in confusion from the events of the preceding night, that he was obliged to defer all inquiries of this nature till he could obtain more perfect self possession. With the air of a person indifferent to the result, he next inquired into the state of his wound, and received from his surgeon the following reply: "Could your mind be kept more at ease, I should not fear ultimately any danger; but I foresee a long confinement and much subsequent weakness from the quantity of blood which has been lost."

Valmire then begged him to return to Melanie, and to send him frequent

accounts of Villeron; and, having entreated his patient to be more composed, Abbeville complied with his wishes, and left him to the care of Bernard.

Abbeville, having opened Melanie's door so gently as not to disturb those within, stopped for a few moments to contemplate the scene which presented itself to his view. Melanie was apparently in a deep sleep; but even in sleep, the agitation of her features, the convulsive motion of her lips, and the crimson flush of her cheek, were remarkably contrasted with the innocent calm and perfect stillness of Lemira's figure, and with her face, pale as descending snows, reclining against the bed; while her arms hanging negligently beside her, and her fine eyes, from which fell tears in silent, but quick succession, were cast upward, and completed this most interesting

and highly expressive picture. As Abbeville advanced the Princess turned her head, and, placing her finger on her lips to show that his patient slept, rose and accompanied him into another room. Here he anticipated the inquiry, which she was going to make, by saying, that the Vicomte, cheated into comparative composure by the tale which he had told him, did not appear worse than he had done on the preceding night; but that he feared every thing from his patient's extreme sensibility when they should be obliged to inform him of Villeron's danger.

"How extraordinary," she exclaimed with a deep sigh, "that one, possessed of such uncommon tenderness of disposition and such a quick perception of what is wrong, should have been hurried into an error of this nature! Deeply, however, as we must lament his misfortunes and deprecate the guilt

which has occasioned them, we must not suffer them to engross all our care; but must direct part of our attention to the execution of those duties which still remain to be performed for the excellent St. Amand."

"Amiable Princess!" he said, "I have already thought on this subject; and, as Melanie now sleeps, let me implore your Highness, for the sake of those unhappy persons whose sole support is now to be derived from you, to take the repose which exhausted nature so much requires; and I will depart to complete those measures which I have commenced for my friend's interment."

Finding that Melanie still slept, Lemira proceeded to Mellidor's door, where she listened with breathless anxiety: but, hearing no noise that could occasion her any alarm, she

entered her own apartment, and, throwing herself into bed, she fell into a short and broken slumber.

That fortitude, which had sustained her benevolent exertions for the unhappy beings, who seemed to be thrown on her by Providence for protection, could not expel from her mind the dreadful images which had taken possession of it; images, which pursued her in the most terrible dreams when sleep had suspended the power of reason. Awaking with a violent start from one of these visions, she found her forehead overspread with a chilly dew, and her whole frame so shaken with horror that some minutes elapsed before she could recall her senses sufficiently to allow her to look round the room, and to be convinced that she had only suffered from the impression of a dream. The waking certainty, dreadful as it was, seemed to her less terrible than

the phantasms which had haunted her during sleep; and, therefore, rising and wrapping round her a loose white robe, she took the lamp and proceeded to Melanie's room. With a gentle hand she withdrew the curtain, but found to her inexpressible astonishment that the bed was empty! The horror-struck Lemira sought for her in the other parts of the room, but she found only Flora; who, overcome with watching, had sunk into a deep slumber. Some dreadful idea, the nature of which she could not exactly define, passed rapidly over her brain; and, with an eagerness which admitted not of delay, she ran into the gallery, and, perceiving a light in Mellidor's room, she pursued her way thither with quick but noiseless steps. Through the half open door she beheld a scene which numbed every nerve with horror, and wrung with anguish and alarm every feeling of her mind.

Mellidor, unconscious of the impending danger, lay in a profound slumber: the tranquillity, that refused to visit him while he retained possession of his senses, was now diffused over his countenance, which, robbed of that fire whose ardor was accustomed to animate his soldiers and to intimidate his enemies, was pale, mild, and melancholy. His arms were thrown over his head, and left his manly breast defenceless and exposed. On the opposite side of the bed stood Melanie: her hair streamed in wild confusion over her back; her flamy eyes were fixed with the watchfulness of madness on her victim's countenance; and in her hand she firmly grasped a sword which was meant in a few moments to terminate his existence, and to bury in his grave the knowledge of her guilt! Already was the fatal weapon descending, when Lemira, springing forwards with that promptitude

which governed all her actions, seized the arm of the frantic girl; who, finding her deed arrested, suffered the weapon to drop from her now powerless hand, and fell with a dreadful shriek by the side of the couch. Her cry awaking Mellidor, he started up and gazed about him with a wildness that discovered his disbelief in the objects with which he was surrounded. In the effort which Lemira had made to save his life, by throwing her whole strength into her arm, ,she had lost her balance, and had fallen across the bed, on which lay also his unsheathed sword; and, as Melanie still remained on the floor struggling in strong convulsions, his wandering eye demanded an explanation of this extraordinary scene. But, before he could possess himself of his ideas sufficiently to allow him to speak, Lemira arose; and, being divested of her presence of mind

by the recent danger from which she had saved him, she clasped his hand within hers; and, while tears of tenderness and compassion showered from her eyes, she fervently exclaimed, "O merciful Heaven! are you indeed preserved?"

Surprised, delighted, overpowered, Mellidor no longer sought for an explanation of those circumstances which had before excited his wonder; but, pressing her hands with wild emotion to his burning lips, he gazed with rapturous admiration on her tender and elevated countenance, and forgot his situation, his misfortunes, and Villeron. Lemira, however, immediately recollected them; and, deeply blushing for the interest which she had unwarily betrayed, she disengaged her hand from his grasp; and, pointing to Melanie, she cried with anguish,

" Wretched, wretched girl! Ah help me to remove her hence, and to restore her to life!"

So saying, she retired into the next room for a covering; and Mellidor, employing the moments of her absence in rising and wrapping round him a gown which lay near the bed, was ready on her return to carry the insensible maid into her apartment, where he placed her on a couch, and assisted the Princess in restoring her to animation. While towards her guilty seducer his indignation was somewhat mitigated by the knowledge of the situation to which he had himself reduced him, for this unfortunate woman he was alone sensible of the deepest compassion; though the dissimulation which she had employed in her intercourse with him, and the ease with which she had sacrificed his happiness, to gratify a weak resentment

for the supposed neglect of her lover, might, in a heart less gentle and less generous than his, have excited feelings very different from those with which his languid eye contemplated the fair and fallen object under his view. But when his regards were involuntarily turned to Lemira's gently bending figure, he was conscious that his sentiments and ideas had experienced a change; and while she, ignorant of his stedfast gaze, wholly devoted her attentions to Melanie, he resigned himself to the indulgence of that pure and ardent affection which had taken possession of his breast; till he was aroused from his pleasing meditations by its fair subject, who said, addressing herself to him, "Alas, she does not revive! Remain here, and I will go and see whether Mon. Abbeville is returned."

Scarcely had she left the room when

Melanie's convulsions ceased, and a few minutes only had elapsed when she unclosed her eyes: but, starting at the sight of Mellidor's figure towering by the side of the bed, she exclaimed, "And who are you? an inhabitant of heaven or earth?"

"My name," he replied, bending his expressive brows, "would make you tremble."

"Ay," she said, "I know it now: you are the Marquis de Valmire."

"Then," he answered, "I will hasten to remove from your sight an object that must be so odious to you." But as he was turning to quit the room, she fastened her hand on his arm, and cried with great emotion, "Stay, Valmire! and hear me speak; for I have, thanks to the Almighty Being who has justly afflicted me, recovered pos-

session of my reason; and I conjure you by the affection which you bore to my murdered father, by the hope which you entertain of pardon at the throne of mercy, by that holy engagement which bound you to protect me, and which cannot be cancelled by my guilt, to give me your sacred promise to grant the request, the dying request which I am going to make to you!"

As she finished speaking, her face becoming overspread with a deathlike paleness, her whole force seemed concentrated in the deep and solemn tones of her voice, and in the convulsive effort with which she grasped the arm of the astonished Mellidor; whilst he, deeply affected with pity for her sufferings, and supposing that what she was going to ask was only invested in consequence by her heated imagination, or at least that it had no refe-

rence to any of his immediate interests, gave, without reluctance, the promise required of him.

"You have promised," she exclaimed, and the colour of returning life passed over her ghastly face, "You have promised never to let the circumstances of the duel pass your lips; never to divulge my guilt to the world; and now I shall die contented, for I shall not die infamous."

The unhappy Valmire was now awakened to the danger in which his compassion had involved him: he had unknowingly put his life into her power, and she had sacrificed it at the shrine of reputation. As to recall his words was, however, impossible, it only remained for him to sustain with courage the prospect of that fate which must be the inevitable result of the secrecy that had been imposed upon him.

Lemira, on her return to the room with Abbeville, was surprised to find Melanie perfectly composed, and Valmire leaning against the wall, with a countenance which exhibited the paleness of death and the calmness of despair. "What are you doing here?" asked the physician with surprise, "The coldness of the morning air may have the worst effects on your yet unclosed wound."

"Ah," answered he, a faint smile passing quickly over his lips, "it is of no consequence; for in any event I must die!"

As he said this he pressed his hand on his head; and the action, throwing back the long sleeve of his dress, discovered a wreath of glittering gems which encircled his wrist: and, while this circumstance confirmed to Abbeville the belief of his love for Melanie, it imparted to the blushing Le-

mira an assurance much more congenial to the feelings of her heart, though in direct opposition to those ideas of propriety and duty which were fixed in her breast; for in these gems she recognized the bracelet that she had permitted him to take as a gage for the safety of her father's life, when, unfettered with any engagement, he might without censure appear as her champion. The feeling of alarmed and indignant virtue heightened the glow of her cheek into the deepest crimson, when she recollected, that he who wore the glittering trophy was the husband of another; and she checked, therefore, the rising hope; and, joining her entreaties to those of Abbeville, they obliged him to retire to his room, whither he was attended by the friendly surgeon.

Lemira remained with Melanie, who replied to her inquiry, "I am better—

much better. I have had dreadful visions; but they are all vanished now, and, if I could sleep, I should be well. You are the being whom I have seen constantly hovering near me in all my dreams; and, when I thought you an angel, I wondered why an inhabitant of heaven should deign to visit a wretch like me. Angelic being! if still you bend your pure nature to pity and to succour my distress, oh! give me some music, which always lulls my senses and soothes my distraction."

Although the mind of the sad orphan was not in a tuneful mood, she could not refuse to gratify her patient by granting her request; and, having sent Flora, who had all this time been buried in sleep, to convey her harp into the room, she thought of a hymn which she had formerly composed with an almost prophetic spirit, and which was perfectly adapted to Melanie's si-

tuation; and, when Flora returned, she accompanied the instrument with the following words:

Thou Power supreme! before whose throne
Thy vassal, Nature, lies:
Unconscious of one act her own,
She lives beneath thine eyes.

To thee exists no small or great:
The fibre of the mite,
And the proud sun's enormous state,
Are equal in thy sight.

Parent of good! and Lord of ill!
Thy smile diffuses joys:—
Thy frown, to awe man's rebel will,
With pains and woe destroys.

Father of mercies! visit here,
In all thy smiles confess'd:
Dry with soft hand the gushing tear;
And still the throbbing breast.

The phantoms of the madden'd brain
Submit to thy controll:
Oh, chase from hence the unholy train;
And yield to peace the soul!

Send Sleep, thy minister of health,
With stores ambrosial fraught,
To hover here; and, with sweet stealth,
To wrap the maiden's thought.

Far from thy blazing realm of power,
The drowsy god reclines;
Where genial dews refresh his bower,
And rose with poppy twines.

There deep from day's detested glare,
In silence and alone,
He boasts a world supremely fair,
And sunshine of his own.

Oh! hither speed his downy plume,
And let him bring his heaven:
And, as its charms dispel her gloom,
Oh! whisper she's forgiven!

Her voice gradually dying away with the tones of the instrument at the conclusion of the last stanza, she raised her eyes, and saw with pleasure that Melanie had fallen into a slumber more profound and tranquil than any which she had enjoyed since the commencement of her misfortunes.

The Princess, therefore, arose; and, desiring Flora to call her when the Vicomtesse awoke, she was proceeding through the gallery to her own room when she was met by Abbeville, who told her that all things were now prepared for the interment of St. Amand's body. The tears, which had stood in her beauteous eyes, rushed down her cheeks as she exclaimed, "I am ready to attend it: alas! scarcely a fortnight has elapsed since I followed to the grave a parent dearer, far dearer to me than life."

Covering herself with her veil, she descended the stairs, and was met at the door by a multitude of people; who, having been the objects of St. Amand's benevolence, expressed their gratitude by their grief and by their anxiety to pay the last tribute of their respect to his remains; and Lemira blamed herself for having felt alone in the world, when there were so many

human beings whose wants she might supply, whose miseries she might alleviate, and whose afflictions were in unison with her own.

The awful ceremony being concluded, she retired to her chamber to indulge her tears, and to offer up her prayers and intercessions to the eternal Throne of Mercy; and these meditations, strengthening her pious confidence, relieved her surcharged heart of the weight with which it had been oppressed.

No sooner had she risen from her knees than Abbeville entered with an open letter in his hand; and his pale and affrighted face induced her to ask, with trembling haste, what new calamity had befallen them? "Henri Villeron is no more!" he replied.

The Princess started from the couch; and clasping her hands together in elo-

quent silence, this action and her countenance alone expressed for some moments the horror that occupied her mind. " And who," she at length exclaimed, " will be the bearer of this fatal intelligence to the unfortunate Valmire?"

" In his present situation," Abbeville answered, " this information would be highly dangerous; for his exertions last night, and the scene to which he was exposed, have given his wound a more unfavourable appearance than it has before assumed; and it is much to be feared that this afflicting blow, by agitating his spirits, will have the worst effects upon his enfeebled frame."

" Ah! then," she said, " desist for some days from communicating to him this calamitous event; and prepare his mind by degrees for its reception, lest

the suddenness of the shock should overwhelm him."

Having agreed to this proposal, the surgeon repaired to Melanie, whom he found in a state of perfect composure, the result of four hours of tranquil slumber; and, upon examination of her symptoms, he discovered that her complaint had changed from an inflammatory fever into one more lingering, but not less dangerous. She talked much of the Princess whom she called an angel of light, and said that she should never be able to repay her the obligations which she had contracted. Having administered to her some medicines, and promised that the Princess should soon resume her attendance, he left her and repaired to her fellow sufferer. Deeply affected as was Lemira with Mellidor's misfortunes, she yet retained sufficient self-possession to order every thing

which would, she thought, conduce to the comfort of the unhappy sufferers; and the servants, more considerate of her than she was of herself, brought breakfast into her dressing room, where she was soon joined by Abbeville. He reported to her that he found Mellidor's spirits extremely high, in consequence, as he supposed, of an increased degree of fever and of the restored sanity of his wife; to whom, in his opinion, the young nobleman was warmly attached.

Although a man of benevolent nature and of excellent principles, and possessing as scientific a knowledge of the component parts of the human frame and of the diseases to which that frame is liable as any of his profession, Abbeville was not endued with the penetration, whose eagle eye, diving into the human heart, sees at one glance the motives which influence,

and the passions by which it is governed. To this circumscription of his view was added a want of suspicion which amounted to credulity; and, implicitly believing every thing he heard without investigating its truth, he was frequently led into error of judgment, where his deficiency of observation left him without the hope of extrication. It is not, therefore, wonderful that he did not perceive that Mellidor's spirits were assumed to hide the bitter workings of his soul; or that he should believe what St. Amand had told him of Valmire's affection for his daughter; or that he should see, or, seeing, should attribute to indisposition the sudden paleness of Lemira's cheek; or should, without attending to this circumstance, proceed to say that he was extremely rejoiced at having been able to conceal from Mellidor the knowledge of Villeron's death; but that he feared the

concealment could not be of long duration, as the parliament would take cognizance of this unfortunate affair, and that the Vicomte would receive the information through the medium of an arrest.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed the trembling girl, "and will he be brought to a trial?"

"Most certainly;" he replied, "and, as our young monarch inherits all his father's detestation of duels and all his severity in the punishment of this sort of unlawful warfare, the result of a trial is much to be dreaded."

"In immediate flight then," said the agonized Lemira, "alone remains the possibility of his escaping the impending stroke of justice until his pardon can be obtained; an act of mercy of which I do not despair, as he has many

and powerful friends at court. The King has bestowed on him distinguished marks of his favor; and, when the wrath of Villeron's relations is softened by time, I have no doubt of his obtaining a pardon through the interest of the Prince de Condé and his own acknowledged merits."

Having perfectly convinced Abbeville of the justness of her reasoning, she ceased to speak: but alas! though her arguments assured him of Valmire's safety, they could not obliterate from her own mind the certainty of his guilt, which the King and nobles could never cancel, and which, at the same time that it rendered his life miserable, must prevent him from being still the object of her esteem. This sad reflection was interrupted by Abbeville; who suggested the necessity of opening St. Amand's will, which had been placed in his possession: but the Prin-

cess, unwilling to wound Melanie's feelings in the present crisis of her disorder, desired that this measure might be deferred, as, during the life of his daughter no doubt could be entertained of the contents of a will, which, made before her misconduct, must be entirely in her favor.

The Princess and the surgeon were on the point of departing to their respective patients when one of the servants entered with the fruits and ices which Lemira had ordered; some of which she gave to Abbeville for Mellidor, and repaired with the rest to Melanie's apartment. She found this unfortunate woman indulging in the luxury of a copious flood of tears: a happiness which had been denied to her since the commencement of her disorder.

Lemira, too judicious to interrupt

this kindly shower of affliction and repentance, did not speak to Melanie; but, having desired Flora to retire to her bed, she sat down in silence, till, stretching out her hand, Melanie exclaimed, "Beloved and admired Princess! will you indeed deign to accept the hand of such a guilty wretch as I am? When all the world forsakes me, will you, pure and virtuous as you are, still watch by the side of my bed and keep me awhile from the grave?"

"Can you then suppose," Lemira replied, only remembering at that moment that Melanie was unhappy, and pressing the hand, which she held, to her heart; "Can you then suppose that I shall ever become so unmindful of what I owe to the unfortunate, and to your family more especially, ever to forsake her whose guilt is washed away by tears of repentance, and who imagines that, by participating her

sorrows, I can assuage them? No, Melanie! I am too well acquainted with misfortune, too nearly allied to infirmity, not to pity and to pardon you. Shall an almighty and an all perfect Creator forgive, and shall a fallible and a finite creature be inexorable to his fellow sufferer?"

"I feel that death will soon rid me of the sense of guilt and misery: but is my soul prepared to enter into a world inhabited by celestial spirits? Can the Supreme forgive my gross dereliction of virtue? the deception which I practised towards my husband, whom I afterwards betrayed? and, lastly, the murder of my angelic father? Ah! no! no! He never can forgive!" As Melanie uttered these words her emotion became extreme, and, hiding her face with her hands, she burst afresh into tears.

"And who," cried Lemira with enthusiasm, "who can limit the mercies of the most High? What presumption is it in us to pretend to dictate to Him whom He is to pardon, and whom He is to condemn! Satisfied that our sentence is to be pronounced by a tender father, and not by a severe judge, let the contrite heart of the sinner be lifted up to Him in prayer, and we are assured by the Redeemer of the world that He will not be deaf to the supplication."

. "My monitress! my consoler! my support!" exclaimed the grateful Melanie, "I fear I am too weak to kneel; but let me hear that gentle voice raised to heaven to intercede for the pardon of my sins; and, as my spirit accompanies your words, perhaps hope may again visit my disconsolate breast."

With this request Lemira very rea-

dily complied; and, taking a book which lay on a table near her, she read some prayers with so much proper emphasis, so much pious earnestness, and with such a conviction of the importance of her subject, that the mourner's heart was penetrated, and she began to regain some of that composure which religion conveys even to the breast of the sinner.

The Princess had scarcely finished when her attention was attracted by a bustle in the road; and, on moving with noiseless steps to the window, she perceived a body of armed men that had entered the gate, and were already at the door of the villa. Happy that Melanie had not been disturbed by the noise, and, too well guessing the cause of their fatal mission, she immediately left the room; and, passing rapidly down the great staircase, she proceeded into the vestibule which she found now occupied by soldiers. She

was at first startled by the sight of so many men; but, having never as yet found her body or her mind unequal to any action which was to be performed for the benefit of her species, she armed herself with courage; and, advancing with a blushing cheek but commanding mièn, she demanded who they were, and by what right they disturbed the tranquillity of that house? In reply to this address a civil officer came forward and, producing a roll, said in a respectful manner that he was furnished with orders from the Dijon parliament to arrest the Vicomte de Valmire for the murder of Henri Villeron. Most dreadful as this alarming intelligence sounded in its reference to Mellidor, and, pale and trembling as she was, she yet summoned up courage to ask by whom the prosecution was commenced?

"By Mon. D'Amarie," he answered, "who being the only remaining rela-

tion of the deceased, except a brother who is absent from France, has thought it necessary to begin the prosecution with great vigor.——You must therefore pardon us, Lady;" he said, again respectfully bowing, "if we proceed to the execution of our duty."

"Stop!" she cried, waving her hand with an air of command as he was advancing to open the door of the hall, which Lemira had shut, "you must proceed no further! The Vicomte de Valmire is confined by the dangerous wound inflicted by Mon. Villeron; which having occasioned a fever, a removal in his present situation could not be effected without the hazard of immediate death. Depart, therefore! and his surgeon shall inform the parliament when he can be removed without danger."

Astonished at her firmness, and at

the power which she assumed to command where others would have entreated, the officer gazed at her delicate and fragile figure with amazement, and at last replied in some confusion. "Our orders are positive; but your word, Madame——"

"If you doubt the word of Lemira de Lorraine," she said with dignified calmness, "I will send for Mon. Abbeville in whom you will have greater confidence."

Ashamed of having hesitated, he assured her that he trusted implicitly in her word, and, having begged and obtained permission to place a guard at the gate, he again bowed, and, ordering the men to leave the house, he departed.

Pleased with having rescued Mellidor from an immediate arrest, and

with having gained time for him to recover (for she now resigned every hope of his being able to escape), the Princess flew to Melanie's room where she continued for several hours, while Flora slept, to heal the wounded spirit of her unhappy patient, and to watch over her fading form; until observing that she had fallen into a doze, and that her servant was sufficiently refreshed to renew her attentions, Lemira left the chamber to communicate to Abbeville the necessity of immediately informing Mellidor of Villeron's death.

And here we will leave her, to give in the following chapter a slight sketch of the person whose name was introduced for the first time in the foregoing conversation, and who now claims some of our attention.

CHAP. XV.

His strutting ribs on both sides show'd
Like furrows he himself had plow'd;
For underneath the skirt of pannel,
'Twixt every two there was a channel.

HUDIBRAS.

DIMINUTIVE in stature almost to dwarfishness, D'Amarie's body seemed to have been worn to its present narrow dimensions by its unceasing restlessness, which was not merely indulged by the continual motion of the whole machine, but was partially extended to his hands, feet, tongue, and eyes, which were never conscious of a moment's repose. Nature, as if

willing to proportion the mind to the mansion which it was to inhabit, made it so very little, that it was utterly incapable of admitting one great idea, or of enjoying any thing unconnected with active employment. In short, it was impossible to regard him without being forcibly reminded of that eight legged animal, whose small body appears to be endued with as large a portion of life as would animate a being of twenty times its size, and which, moving with a velocity that defies the power that would arrest it, creeps uninvited into every aperture, and only ceases to torment when it ceases to exist.

The early part of D'Amarie's life was devoted to trade; but, having had a competent fortune left to him by a distant relation, his friends counselled him to give up business; and never from that hour did they cease to re-

pent their ill-starred advice; for, finding it impossible to live without employment, and having none of his own to pursue, he made his friends the objects of his attention. Among his acquaintance were there any between whom a difference of opinion generated a coolness? His ill conducted measures, to effect a reconciliation, made the breach irreparable. Were there any whose temporal affairs were deranged? If D'Amarie's services were accepted to settle them, they were frequently involved in ruin. Sometimes, indeed, he was more fortunate; but as he must be always busy, he often undertook what he did not understand; and, though it is to be hoped that he preferred good to evil, he would rather be engaged in a bad cause than be destitute of employment. His own spare person was not the only evidence of the perturbation of his spirit; for his wife, his children,

nay, his dog, and cat, were all equally lean: and that unhappy piece of horse-flesh which was obliged, like the famous Rosinante of the no less famous Spanish knight, to carry his master whither the " foul fiend" directed him, was a proper subject for the lecturers on natural history; his skeleton being sufficiently conspicuous without the aid of dissection, or of any further reduction made by the hand of death.

It was this man to whom Villeron, perfectly acquainted as he was with his cousin's character, committed in his will the prosecution of Mellidor; well assured that D'Amarie's activity was a pest which neither died or slept, and which would not allow Valmire to escape that punishment which Henri's revengeful spirit ardently desired, even when it was going to receive its own final sentence. A few minutes before this took place, the sur-

geon desired D'Amarie to leave the room, whither he was not allowed to return until the body was confined in the coffin, which was done almost immediately on account of the mortified state of the wound. The surgeon then despatched a letter to Abbeville, acquainting him with the fact: the funeral quickly followed; which was conducted with great privacy, the body being carried out at a back door for the purpose of avoiding the creditors of the deceased; who assembled round the house in crowds, calling loudly for an examination of his affairs, by which they hoped that their demands would be satisfied.

Having guarded, as he supposed, every avenue by which Mellidor might effect his escape, D'Amarie proceeded to look into the accounts of his relation: but greatly was he disappointed to find that Villeron had expended all the fortune which his father had bequeath-

ed to him, and was besides so deeply involved in debt, that, if he had preserved his life, he must have lost his liberty. D'Amarie now called in the creditors; and, declaring to them the situation in which he found his cousin's circumstances, said, that, however he might be grieved for the losses which they were to sustain, he was compelled to dismiss them without payment. Finding that no other answer was to be obtained, they departed; some uttering bitter imprecations, some in dignified silence, and some with the acknowledgment of being rightly served for having trusted a man of Villeron's notorious character. This business being adjusted, D'Amarie went without loss of time to the parliament, where he was informed that he had acted injudiciously in accusing the Vicomte de Valmire of murder; as the surgeon who attended him had sworn before the parliament, that the illness, which prevented the

Vicomte from being brought to trial, was the consequence of the wound which he had received from Villeron; and that, if he persisted in the words of the accusation, the sword, still stained with Mellidor's blood and having the name of Henri Villeron inscribed on it, would be produced on the trial. For these reasons D'Amarie was obliged to change the word murder into those of killing a man in a duel; a crime which, by the old laws of France, rendered its perpetrator equally obnoxious to the punishment of death. Understanding that, from the statement of the surgeon, Mellidor could not be instantly removed for trial, and that the parliament, wishing to show every respect to his rank and to his high character, had confined him in his own house, D'Amarie was forced to depart, though he never suffered an hour to elapse without making inquiries after the health of his meditated victim.

CHAP. XVI.

Who is it that hath died for this offence?
There's many have committed it.

....

The law hath not been dead, though it has slept.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

SCARCELY had Lemira issued from Melanie's chamber when her attention was fixed by a person who entered, at the same moment, from the other end of the gallery. It was a tall, slight, and gently bending figure, to which age had lent its venerableness without imparting its infirmity; and in which the vivid tints of youth, being mellowed by the hand of time,

left the sensibility, intelligence, and benignity of the countenance in full vigor. His soft silvery hair was thrown back from his forehead, and concealed not the bright serenity of his eyes which " shone sweetly lambent with celestial day." Impressed with that respect which an amiable appearance, when united to years, never fails to excite in the hearts of the young and unsophisticated, Lemira advanced with a smile of benevolence, and was going to address him, when he prevented her by inquiring in a voice that exactly corresponded with his countenance for the Vicomte de Valmire. The Princess regarded him for a few moments without speaking; and as, in this interval of silence, the deep dejection of her countenance was not unperceived by him, or his perception of it unaccompanied by the expression of solicitude as to its cause, she begged him to follow her

into the saloon, where his anxiety should be relieved.

"Pardon me, Madam," he said when they were seated, "for expressing the earnest solicitude which I cannot help feeling; for being, by my character of his preceptor, perfectly acquainted with the many amiable and noble qualities of the young Vicomte, I am deeply interested in whatever relates to him."

"Alas!" exclaimed the Princess with a deep sigh, "You are then his friend, and are yet unacquainted with his recent misfortunes."

"A letter from Mellidor written during his last visit at Paris informed me of the death of his father the Vicomte, and it is to this event, perhaps, the Vicomtesse now alludes."

"Alas! no," replied Lemira, "I was ignorant of this additional calamity." Then, blushing at being mistaken for Valmire's wife, she added, "I am not the Vicomtesse; but I mourn with her the death of her excellent father, whose kindness sweetened the bitter draught which it is appointed for me to drink. Monsieur Valmire is confined to his chamber by illness; but there you will bring friendship to assuage his grief, and piety to calm his afflicted spirit."

Having learnt the name of the stranger she arose; and, ringing the bell, ordered the servant, who attended, to desire Mons. Abbeville to inform the Vicomte that the Abbé de Fleurville was impatient to see him.

"Perhaps," said the Abbé when the servant had quitted the room, "the

unexpected loss of his father has occasioned Mellidor's illness."

Lemira did not reply to this supposition; but her evident embarrassment convinced him that she knew more than she thought it right to discover; and, to relieve a confusion, the cause of which he respected, he again mentioned the late Vicomte's illness in the following manner: "I learnt from the physician who attended him that he had caught a fever, the violence of which nothing could abate, and which had reduced him to the lowest state of weakness before the arrival of his son; who was, however, in time to receive his last blessing."

This discourse was interrupted by the entrance of Abbeville, who came to conduct Fleurville to his pupil: but, before their departure, Lemira, who had brushed off the tears which

dimmed her dark eyes, begged that they would return and dine with her, as she had something to communicate to the Abbé. He willingly accepted her invitation ; but Abbeville excused himself, being obliged, as he said, immediately to attend another patient, from whom he should not be able to return until after the hour of dinner. Having therefore conducted the Abbé to the door of Mellidor's apartment, he then said, "You will find the young nobleman in a state of extreme misery; but I hope that your friendship will be able to give him some consolation."

He then departed, and Fleurville entered the room, where his benevolence was much shocked at the change which illness and sorrow had effected in Mellidor's appearance. Unable to rise from the couch, he extended his arms in which he infolded the vene-

rable Abbé; and, suffering his head to fall on his friend's faithful breast, he bedewed it with tears, which alone betrayed for some minutes the unutterable anguish of his mind. At length, the violence of his emotion having subsided, he exclaimed, " O my beloved preceptor! my dear, my only friend! forgive these tears which should not stain a warrior's cheek; and which discover that my mind is not sufficiently steeled to baffle the arrows of affliction: but if that affliction was unsullied with guilt; if my once fair fame was not to be blackened by the imputation of the worst of crimes; if I was not to be condemned by the sentence of every virtuous heart, as well as by the laws of my country; if every idea was not presented to me through the medium of intolerable remorse, I should sustain the wounding rod of the Almighty with the fortitude of a man and of a christian.

Yes!" he added, perceiving that Fleurville's astonishment and horror prevented him from speaking, "behold here the evidence of my crime!"

He then tore open his vest, and discovered to the Abbe his breast bound with thick and bloody bandages. Fleurville started and exclaimed, "Merciful heaven! you have not surely been betrayed into a duel?"

With a deep groan Valmire fell back on the couch, and the livid paleness of his face almost induced the Abbé to suppose that he was fainting, until, starting with a sudden violence, he seized his friend's arm, and, regarding him with a look of exquisite agony, he cried, "Would to God that I was the only victim; but these hands are imbrued in the blood of a fellow creature! I have sent a guilty being to appear with his unrepented sins before

the tribunal of his heavenly judge! Ah! that look of horror is what I ought to expect, but what I cannot bear; for I have not yet learnt to sustain without shrinking the just indignation of a virtuous friend!"

Although greatly shocked at the error into which his pupil had been betrayed, Fleurville saw the goodness of his heart, and the justness of his ideas in the severity of his self-upbraiding; and, readily acquitting him of any bad intention though he could not think him innocent of crime, he forbore, by reproof, to aggravate the anguish of his feelings: but he knew too well the benefit to be derived from repentance, to endeavour to lessen in his friend the sensibility which he discovered for his offence.

"It is this," resumed Mellidor, taking

from the couch the note which had been sent to him by the parliament of Dijon; "it is this that a few minutes ago imparted to me the fatal intelligence of my antagonist's death; an event of which the kindness of the lovely Princess of Lorraine, whose noble courage has been exerted to preserve my feelings from any sudden shock, would have still kept me ignorant: but my servant Bernard, not knowing the misery he prepared for me, brought me that letter during a short absence of Mon. Abbeville's, and has thus plunged me into a state of complete wretchedness."

Having read the note which the trembling hand of Mellidor presented to him, Fleurville said in a mild voice: "And will you not confide to your friend the particulars of this unfortunate affair? for, from my knowledge

of your character, I am induced to think something would appear to mitigate your offence."

"My dear Abbé," Valmire answered with a deep sigh, "every way I am unfortunate! My sufferings would indeed be sensibly alleviated, could I even to you reveal those circumstances which would convince you, that I am not wholly unworthy of the education which you have bestowed on me; and, that I am in reality more the object of your pity than of your censure: but a sacred promise seals my lips; and my silence, which will expose me to the condemnation of the law, will stamp villain on my name, and will confound me with the murderer."

While he pronounced these words he was seized with a fearful shuddering; and Fleurville, with the eagerness of strong interest, inquired if there

were no witnesses to the transaction?

"That question," replied Mellidor, "is too closely connected with my promise to be answered. Believe only that I am less criminal than I appear to be; and, though guilty of shedding human blood, believe, that the action was rather the result of my unfortunate situation than of cruelty or even of passion."

"I do believe," cried the Abbé, his countenance throwing off the severity it had assumed, "I do believe that you always act according to the dictates of true honor, piety, and equity: but why then this remorse? Why these ravings of despair? which might induce even those who possess the most thorough knowledge of your character to suppose that passion, smothering the voice of humanity and justice,

had impelled you to the commission of an unprincipled and a barbarous deed."

"I am sensible," said the unfortunate youth, "that my remorse is disproportioned to my offence: but the still small voice of conscience continually whispers to me, that a man has fallen by my hand; and reason, resigning her power, yields me up to the despotic dominion of despair."

"Moderate, my dearest Mellidor! this excess of sensibility," said the Abbé with a benevolent smile, "which will be equally prejudicial to your health and to your cause. To me, indeed, you may pour your tears without restraint, sensible that I shall attribute them solely to that tenderness of conscience which fears to have offended; but to the world in general, who think that remorse cannot exist

unless preceded by great crimes, they will appear as evidences of guilt, and will be the means of condemning you without the hope of pardon."

He paused for a moment and then added, while the serenity of his countenance was shaded by apprehension, "But as you seem to say that you can produce no witnesses, and, as your fatal promise forbids you to divulge the circumstances of the duel, I fear——"

"That the sentence of the judges will be against me," said Mellidor, finishing the period which the affection of the Abbé had hesitated to conclude.

"Fear not, my respected preceptor, to tell me that I am to die," and while he spoke, the first smile, which Fleurville had seen, illumined his face,

"for death is become welcome to me. He is a friend whose approach will suspend my griefs; and who will carry me before a tribunal where my heart will be seen by the omniscient judge, and sentence will be pronounced on me according to the purity of my intentions, and not according to the apparent guilt of my action."

"Admirable young man!" cried the Abbé. "But while I applaud your resignation I must blame the despair, of which I fear it is the result. You cannot refuse consistently with your duty, by a temporary concealment, to escape from justice until the interest of your friends may obtain a pardon for you? You will not certainly refuse to spare your sister the anguish of being deprived of her brother, her protector, her friend? Of one who would guard her inexperienced innocence from the contagion of the world,

would waft from her the insidious breath of vice, and would supply to her the loss of those parents, one of whom has been removed from her by death, and the other by the attractions of dissipation? No, Mellidor! you will not be so unthankful as to throw off those duties which you have yet to perform, because misfortune has ventured to attack you, and the stain of guilt may be a blot upon your name."

Mellidor, who was much affected during this speech, heaved a deep sigh, and then replied, "If I am acquitted of the crime laid to my charge I will consent to live, because I shall then be supposed innocent, and because I consider that I have no right to resign my existence until the gracious Being who gave it shall be pleased to withdraw it; and, if even after my condemnation I should be

pardoned, I will not madly reject the proffered mercy, but will cherish life, according to the dictates of duty. But I should deem myself as much guilty of cowardice if I fled from death when it met me on the scaffold, as I should, if I shunned it when it approached me on my enemy's spear, and threatened me with a more glorious grave; and though my reason, when I can listen to its voice, assures me that I am not criminal in the sight of Heaven, yet have I broken the laws of my country, and must yield up my life as the just sacrifice which they claim. Flight would condemn me in the opinion of the brave as certainly as would the sentence of the judge, and would add to the crime with which I am charged, that of premeditated baseness. As to Rosalie, tenderly as I love her and convinced as I am that much of her happiness and future welfare depends upon my ex-

istence, I cannot, even for her, sacrifice my honor, though for her I would make a surrender of my life. These, my friend, are my ideas on the subject; which no arguments, deduced from your general philanthropy or your particular affection, can ever induce me to change; since I am convinced that, if the amiable sensibilities of your heart did not influence your judgment, it would concur in this instance with mine."

The Abbé thought with Mellidor, yet would he not resign his benevolent purpose, but added, " O think of your young and unhappy widow, of her tender and disappointed love! of——"

He was prevented from proceeding by observing a frown settle on Valmire's brow; who replied hastily and with evident embarrassment, " Speak no more, my dear Abbé, on this sub-

ject. I have already told you my resolution, which nothing can alter. It is better to die by justice than to live with dishonor. In the few days which are allowed me before my trial, your society will be a real consolation to me; for I have much to say, and much to confide. But you are now summoned to dinner:" he added with assumed calmness as the sound of a bell caught his ear, " leave me for the present, my friend! and, if the Princess of Lorraine can part with you in the evening, return to give me the comfort of your society, and receive my last directions respecting Rosalie."

" Your last directions, my dear Mellidor!" cried the Abbé with a look of penetrating tenderness.

" If the result of my trial should be unfavorable," he replied with a smile, intended to convey consolation to the

afflicted Abbé, "it will be better to relieve my last moments of all temporal concerns, that I may wholly resign my mind to the contemplation of that awful change of existence which I must very soon experience, and may endeavour with all my powers to make my soul fit to appear before that eternal tribunal whence I am to receive my final sentence; but, if I am acquitted, my directions, being no longer of use, will be as if they had not been spoken."

Mellidor now insisted on his friend's departure; and, leaving the apartment with the tears swelling in his eyes, Fleurville entered the dining-room, and employed the few minutes, which intervened before the appearance of the Princess, in reflecting and commenting on the peculiar expression of Mellidor's countenance when he mentioned the Vicomtesse. "Something,"

said he to himself, "must be wrong there; but I shall soon be able to obtain from the Princess the requisite information; as her residence in this family must have supplied her with the knowledge of those peculiar circumstances which led to Mellidor's mysterious illness, and to the evident displeasure he discovered at the accidental mention of his bride."

Scarcely had he concluded this short soliloquy when Lemira, who had been detained by Melanie, entered the room. The presence, however, of the servants during dinner prevented him from addressing to her those questions which he was anxious to have resolved; and, their minds being too much occupied with the miseries of their friends to allow them to converse on any indifferent topic, they preserved a mutual silence till

their short and hurried repast was finished.

Lemira having taken the first opportunity, after the removal of the domestics, to inquire for Mellidor, the Abbé gave her an account of the state in which he found him; of the frown which he had remarked when he spoke of the Vicomtesse, and implored her to relieve his uncertainty, by imparting to him her knowledge on these interesting subjects.

" At one time I entertained hopes," Lemira replied, " that the unfortunate events which have lately plunged this once happy family into the abyss of misery, might have been successfully concealed from the prying curiosity of the world; but the revengeful spirit of Mon. Villeron's friends, urging them to prosecute the Vicomte de Valmire

with the utmost rigour, will shortly disclose those circumstances which ought, for the sake of all who are concerned in them, to be buried in eternal oblivion. But my knowledge of the private history of the Vicomte's family, and even of that of the excellent St. Amand, is so limited, that I am wholly unable to form a correct opinion on the subject of your inquiry, or to relieve your mind from the doubts with which it is distressed. I only know that the Vicomte has been engaged in a dispute with a man, who, as Mon. Abbeville informs me, bore a character of great depravity; that this man fell in the conflict, while his antagonist did not escape without a severe wound. Admitted as I have been by St. Amand's kindness into the bosom of his family, it would be criminal in me to betray its secrets, or to examine too curiously

into the cause of its misfortunes. I am satisfied with endeavouring to improve the condition of those whom the accident of my situation has placed under my care."

"To me," said Fleurville after a pause, "any further knowledge of this unfortunate affair would be of no importance, unless evidence could be brought forward to save the life and restore the lost peace of mind of my beloved Mellidor."

"Does he then refuse to have recourse to flight for safety?" tremulously inquired the Princess.

"I have already," answered the Abbé, "employed all the arguments and all the entreaties, which my judgment and my affection could supply, to induce him to take the step which

you suggest; but alas! my efforts have been entirely unsuccessful! Taking the field on the side of high honor he controverts all my arguments, resists all my entreaties, and has dismissed me from the room, while he exults in the victory which he has gained over my reason, but not over my affection. O noble Lady! not having had the opportunity, which my office of preceptor has given to me of becoming intimately acquainted with the virtues of Mellidor's mind, you cannot fully estimate his worth, or imagine the poignancy of my feelings on seeing the noble structure which I, with the blessing of Heaven, had erected, laid prostrate on the earth!"

The tears, which flowed from the Abbé's mild eyes as he ceased to speak, endeared him to Lemira, who, however, discovered her interest in

the misfortunes of Mellidor only by breathing a deep drawn sigh.

"There is one method," resumed Fleurville, after a few moments' reflection, "which might yet possibly succeed in inducing my unfortunate friend to escape; if your Highness would deign to give your assistance towards its accomplishment?"

"Ah," replied Lemira, "any services of mine, which have for their object the preservation of a fellow creature, you may command."

He then implored her to vouchsafe to see the Vicomte, and to employ her influence to persuade him to evade the power of the law until the fury of Mon. Villeron's relations should in some measure subside.

"Most willingly," she answered,

" would I thus earn your gratitude; but, being assured that I possess no influence with the Vicomte de Valmire, I would not expose myself, without even the chance of success, to the mortification of a refusal: besides," she added, while the paleness of death overspread her face, " to save him from the hazard of an immediate removal to prison, I imprudently pledged my word for his appearance before the parliament of Dijon, whenever the state of his wound should allow him to quit, without danger, the quiet of his present confinement; and I should disdain to have recourse to artifice, even to save the life of the Vicomte, to whom I am indebted for more than the preservation of my own existence."

Though the Abbé's hopes were extinguished by this speech, his admi-

ration of the firmness and integrity, which dictated it, made him instantly dismiss the subject; and Lemira had withdrawn when Mon. D'Amarie was announced.

END OF VOL. I.

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